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THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE

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STANDARD LITERATURE SERIES

THE
DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE

BY
JAMES K. PAULDING

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING COMPANY
NEW YORK ·:· BOSTON ·:· NEW ORLEANS

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INTRODUCTION.

THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE is the best of many good books by the same author. It presents a truthful and very interesting picture of Dutch life and manners in New York a hundred and fifty years ago. The Dutch were the earliest European settlers on Manhattan Island, where they established a trading post and built a fort soon after its discovery in 1609 by the celebrated navigator, Henry Hudson. In 1624 a charter was given to a company in Amsterdam who named the country New Netherlands and sent out a governor. The Dutch settlements soon extended up the valley of the Hudson River and across it in what is now New Jersey.

In the Introduction to the "Water-Witch," STANDARD LITERATURE, No. 27, will be found a historical sketch of the colony up to the beginning of the eighteenth century. At this time it had for many years been under the rule of the British, who claimed that the district it occupied was part of the Virginia territory, and therefore belonged to them. The English king, Charles II., deeded it to his brother James, Duke of York, and in honor of him the name of the settlement was changed from New Netherlands to New York.

Though the British became the rulers of the colony, the great majority of the population were, and for a long time continued to be, Dutch. Their relations with the English, whom they regarded as intruders and enemies, were not of a very friendly character, and for many years there was little social intercourse between the two peoples. The total white population of the colony at the time the English took possession was about twelve thousand. Besides the British and Dutch, it included immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants, from France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and other European countries.

At the period of the story the white settlements were confined to the districts bordering the Hudson River on each side, and reached no farther north than Albany, the remotest frontier town being Schenectady, on the Mohawk River. The industries of the colonists were mainly agriculture and fur trade with the Indians. During the Dutch administration of the colony a class of land proprietors called *patroons* was established. They were persons to whom large tracts of land were granted, or who were authorized to buy large tracts from the Indians, on condition that they should settle on each tract a colony of not less than fifty families. The patroons were very wealthy, and in many respects had the powers of lords in European countries. One of the earliest was Kiliaen van Rensselaer, who became owner of the greater part of the land now forming the counties of Rensselaer, Albany, and Columbia. Another rich patroon was Michael Pauw. He purchased Staten Island from the Indians, as well as the district on which Jersey City now stands.

All the interior part of what is now New York State—from Albany to Lakes Erie and Ontario and for miles north and south—was, during the greater part of the colonial period, occupied by Indians of the family known as Iroquois or Hurons. These were united in a league called the Five Nations, the tribes composing which were the Mohawks, Oneidas, Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas. Early in the eighteenth century these tribes were joined by the Tuscaroras of the South, and thus became the Six Nations.

About the time the Dutch first settled on Manhattan Island the Five Nations numbered probably eleven thousand souls. To-day they are over fifteen thousand, but they no longer occupy their original hunting grounds. Some of them are settled on land set apart for them in New York State, others are scattered in various parts of the North and West. The Iroquois were a very important factor in the many conflicts on American soil between the French and English during colonial times. They usually fought on the side of the English, but in what is known as the French and Indian War they took the side of France. This war began in 1754 and continued till 1760. It was caused partly by disputes between the French and English as to their respective claims to territory beyond the Alleghanies, but at the same time the French and English were at war in Europe for causes which had reference exclusively to European political troubles.

The chief events of the struggle in America are noted in the Introduction to the "Last of the Mohicans," STANDARD LITERATURE, No. 29. On the British side a conspicuous part was taken by Sir William Johnson, who is introduced as a leading character in THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE. Sir William was a very remarkable man in the period of the story. Perhaps no European ever was more popular with the Indians or had more influence over them.

He was born in Ireland. When he was twenty years of age, he came to America at the invitation of his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, to take the management of a large estate which Sir Peter had purchased in the Mohawk valley, near the junction of the Mohawk and Schoharie rivers. Here young Johnson made his home, considerably outside the line of civilization, and with the Mohawk Indians for his neighbors. The place where he lived is the site of the present town of Johnstown, which was called after his name. He soon learned the language of the red men, acquired a thorough knowledge of their customs and manners, cultivated a friendly acquaintance with the chiefs, and became a favorite with the whole tribe. The author of the story takes a novelist's license in making Sir William give an account of his settlement in America (see Chapter X.) somewhat different from the actual facts here stated.

The colonial government had established at Albany a board of Indian Commissioners to manage Indian affairs and maintain friendly relations with the Iroquois, so as to keep them from forming alliances with the French, and to secure for the English the entire advantage of the lucrative fur traffic. The Indians lived chiefly by hunting, and therefore had large quantities of furs to sell. Both English and French traders were eager to buy, for the furs commanded high prices in the markets of Europe, and being obtained from the Indians in exchange for manufactured articles of small value, the profits of the business were very great.

Much more important, however, than the profits of the fur trade, was the political advantage of friendship with the Indians, in view of the value of their help to either side in time of war between the English and the French. The British governor of the province of New York, Admiral George Clinton, recognizing the ability of William Johnson and his great influence with the Indians, resolved to secure his services as an Indian agent, and so, in 1746, he appointed him to the office of superintendent of Indian affairs. From this time to the time of his death, in 1774, Johnson remained in the employment of the King and was among the most efficient and trusted of the officers of the colonial administration. He always lived on his farm or estate in the Mohawk valley. He served in a military as well as a civic capacity and took active and prominent part in all the campaigns of the French and Indian War.

The battle referred to in the story (Chapter XXV.), in which Sir William Johnson led the Indian warriors, was fought in July, 1758, General Abercrombie commanding the British and Colonial forces. The description in the text, though in many particulars not quite in accord with the historical facts, is, however, valuable as giving an interesting and correct idea of the war methods of the Indians, and as showing how, through ignorance of those methods and stubborn unwillingness to take suggestions or counsel from competent colonial officers, British generals in America sometimes suffered disastrous defeats, though in command of forces much stronger than those of the enemy. It was through disdaining to listen to the advice of George Washington that General Braddock was utterly defeated and lost his life, in 1755, in the battle with the French and Indians near Fort Duquesne.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

James Kirke Paulding, the author of THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE, was born in Dutchess County, New York, in 1779. He was not only a novelist, but a poet, historian, and statesman. He was a contemporary of Washington Irving, and was associated with him in the composition and publication of a series of humorous papers under the title "Salmagundi," which were much appreciated and became widely popular.

Among Mr. Paulding's own works, besides "The Dutchman's Fireside," were "The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan"; "John Bull in America, or the New Munchausen"; "Merry Tales of Three Wise Men of Gotham"; a "Life of Washington"; and a novel entitled "The Old Continental." In 1821 Mr. Paulding was appointed Secretary of the Navy. He died in 1860.

THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

Somewhere about the time of the old French war, there resided on the rich border that skirts the Hudson, not a hundred miles from the good city of Albany, a family of some distinction, which we shall call Vancour, consisting of three brothers whose names were Egbert, Dennis, and Ariel. They were the sons of one of the earliest as well as most respectable of the emigrants from Holland, and honorably sustained the dignity of their ancestry, by sturdy integrity, liberal hospitality, and a generous public spirit.

On the death of the old patriarch, the estate was amicably divided among his three sons. Egbert, the elder brother, received the third part which occupied the centre, with the old mansion-house; Dennis, that on the right, and Ariel, that on the left-hand. Each of these occupied the space which lay between a range of hills and the banks of the Hudson, on which they bordered about two miles equally. With a view to this arrangement, Mr. Vancour had erected, at different times, a comfortable mansion on either of the extremities of his estate; so that the two younger brothers were saved the expense of building.

At the period in which our history commences, the old gentleman had been dead many years, and Ariel, the youngest of the three brothers, was fast verging towards that stage of life in which a man runs imminent risk of being set down as an old bachelor by the young ladies. Dennis, the second brother, was a widower without family; and Egbert was blessed with a most notable wife, the mother of an only daughter verging towards womanhood, and finishing her education at a boarding-school in New York. The house occupied by Mr. Vancour was a large square mansion of two low stories, built of little yellow Dutch bricks, imported from Holland. Right through the centre ran a wide and stately hall, wainscoted with oak; from the farther end of which a broad staircase rose in such a gentle ascent as to be almost as easy as a railway. This staircase was defended on the outer side by a row of chubby mahogany banisters, ranged so as almost to touch each other, and presenting in their plump exuberance fit models for the legs of all the gallant burghers of the country round.

We know not whether it was in sympathy with these classical patterns, or from some other influence, but certain it is, there hath not, since the fashion of them changed, been seen so goodly a set of legs as was exhibited every Sabbath day in summer-time, in woolen hose, at the little stone church of the Flats, at the time of which we are treating.

The furniture of the mansion corresponded with its Doric[1] dignity and simplicity. There was nothing too fine for use, or which was not used whenever occasion required; although there was one hallowed room, dignified with the name of the spare room, into which no one intruded except on very particular occasions. Here was the sacred deposit of ancestral heirlooms. Chairs with high and haughty backs and worked satin bottoms, from the old country; a Brussels carpet; two vast china jars, on either side of the chimney, nearly five feet high; and the treasure of all treasures, a Dutch cabinet, richly ornamented with brass hinges and a lock covering almost half its front, that when properly rubbed, as it was every day, it was dazzling to behold.

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[1] Doric was the oldest and simplest style of Greek architecture.

The house stood about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the midst of a rich meadow, dotted here and there with a vast primeval elm, standing like a wide umbrella, under which the lazy herds lay ruminating free from the midday sun. Four of these surrounded and almost hid the mansion, all but its front, and furnished retreats for a host of twittering birds. Within a hundred yards on one side ran a brook, which descended from the hills about a mile in the rear, and which in the course of ages had made a deep ravine, skirted on either side with a wilderness of various trees, and shrubs, and briers, and wild flowers, and vines of every sort. This copse was wide enough to shelter an invisible road, the only passage to and from the house; so that all around it was nothing but one fair carpet of delicious green, unbroken by road or pathway.

The river in front slept between its verdant banks, for its course was so slow, so quiet, so almost imperceptible, that it seemed to partake in that repose which it diffused all around. Besides the elms and sycamores which the rich alluvion fostered into majestic exuberance, its borders were fringed at intervals with silvery willows drinking its pure moisture. The stream was about a quarter of a mile wide, so that every rural sight and rural sound could be clearly distinguished from side to side; and at the extremity of the rich meadows on the opposite shore, there rose a bold precipice of gray-beard rocks, enamelled with light green mosses, and bearing on its summit a crown of towering pines of everlasting verdure.

The brothers, to whom the reader has just been introduced, partook in a great degree of the character of the scene of their birth and of their inheritance, but modified in some particular by certain peculiarities in their situation. Peaceful as was the abode they inhabited, and the aspect of all around them, they were not always reposing in the lap of security. Within thirty or forty miles, in almost every direction, roamed various tribes of Indians, whose fierce, unsteady, and revengeful nature made their friendship as precarious as their enmity was terrible. True, they were now at peace, or rather they had begun to submit to their inevitable destiny; yet still their friendship could not be relied on, and they not unfrequently approached the neighboring settlements in the dead of the night, where they committed the most horrible atrocities. This state of things contributed to keep up a warlike spirit among the early settlers. The Vancours and their neighbors all found it necessary to mingle the arts of peace and war together; all had their arms at hand, and all knew how to use them.

CHAPTER II.

WAITING FOR THE PATROON.

THE Vancours were people of fashion, as well as fortune. The elder more especially, from inhabiting the family mansion, and having a regularly established household, saw a great deal of company at times from Albany, New York, and elsewhere. His house, indeed, was open to all respectable visitors, and was seldom without some stranger, friend, or relative from a distance. They were received and treated with that plain, unostentatious, quiet hospitality which always bespeaks a welcome. Madame Vancour, as she was called by way of eminence, was a New York lady, born and bred, partaking almost equally in the blood of the genuine Hollander, the Englishman, and the Huguenot.[1] New York, being at that time the residence of the English governor, was, of course, the focus of fashion. The governor affected somewhat of the kingly state; and there being always a considerable number of troops in garrison, the place swarmed with red coats. These ruddy sons of Mars[2] were the prime objects of the ambition of our city belles, and happy was the damsel and proud the mother that could unite their fate and family with the lieutenant of a company of British grenadiers.[1] His excellency had plenty of aids-de-camp to keep up his state, write his invitations, pick up news, and carve at his table. These important functions, of course, entitled them to great distinction among our provincial belles.

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[1] (*pron.* hu′ge-not) The Protestants were so called in France in the sixteenth century.

[2] **Mars was the god of war, according to the belief of the ancients, hence soldiers are sometimes called "sons of Mars."**

The Vancours had connections in New York among the most wealthy of the inhabitants, and seldom missed paying them a visit every autumn. They were always well received, and as the governor never came to Albany without partaking in their hospitalities, he thought himself bound to repay them when they visited the place of his residence. This intercourse with the gay world kept up certain feelings and habits which seldom fail to accompany it; but still, in the main, their characters partook largely of the simplicity of the country where they resided.

Dennis and Ariel, the two younger brothers, being, the one a lonely widower, the other an equally lonely bachelor, spent a good deal of their time at the old mansion, where they were as much at home as at their own houses. The two elder brothers were greatly attached to each other, and fond of being together in their own quiet way. They sometimes passed a whole morning without exchanging half a dozen words. They had a way of communicating their thoughts by certain inarticulate sounds and gestures which each one understood as well as he did his mother tongue.

Ariel, on the contrary, was ungovernably impatient of idleness, and never could sit still fifteen minutes at a time without falling into a doze. He was a great hand at grafting and inoculating fruit trees, an industrious seeker after mushrooms, and mighty in all undertakings which had for their object the furtherance of good eating. In truth, he was one of those persons who are seldom without a project for the benefit of their neighbors, and who, though they never by any chance succeed in their own undertakings, can always tell to a nicety what will be most for the advantage of others.

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[1] Formerly this name was given to soldiers who threw hand grenades or explosive shells. The term is now used merely as the designation of a regiment.

"They won't be here to-day," said Dennis, one morning, after his elder brother and himself had been sitting with their heads inclined towards each other about two hours, without exchanging a word.

"They won't be here to-day," echoed Egbert, and there ended the conversation for an hour at least.

"I think it will clear up before noon," quoth Dennis, eyeing the clouds as they separated above, disclosing a little piece of clear blue sky.

"I think it will," responded Egbert, and the matter was settled.

The expected arrivals were Colonel Vancour's wife and daughter, the latter of whom, having finished her education at the boarding-school, was now on her way home from New York with her mother. The reader will be pleased to recollect that this was long before the invention of steamboats, and when a genuine Albany packet never dreamed of sailing but with a fair wind, nor scarcely ever passed the Overslaugh[1] without paying it the compliment of running high and dry aground. We ourselves well remember, in long after-times, having once lain there seven days within seven miles of Albany; yet such appeared the immeasurable distance, that no one on board ever dreamed of leaving the vessel and going to the city by land. All waited patiently for an easterly wind or a heavy rain to float them off again, and spent the time pleasantly in eating and smoking.

The daughter, accompanied by her mother and Tjerck, an old black servant, had been expected more than a week, every day of which precisely the same colloquy as that we have just recorded passed between the two brothers. We ought to mention that Mr. Egbert Vancour was prevented attending the ladies home by having been appointed a commissioner to hold a treaty with the Five Nations at Schenectady.[1] The past week had been one of almost continual rain, and the three brothers each began to manifest impatience in his own way.

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[1] a bar or sandbank in the Hudson River, a few miles below Albany.

At length, towards evening the yellow sun broke through the opening western clouds, most gorgeously gilding the weeping landscape. A brisk, mellow south wind sprang up, and a fleet of sloops with snow-white sails appeared below, plowing their merry way up the river. All turned out to see if they could distinguish the Patroon, the vessel in which the ladies had taken passage. The indefatigable Ariel was down at the wharf, in front of the mansion house, making a prodigious noise, and calling out to every vessel that passed to know if the Patroon was coming. Sloop after sloop passed on without stopping, until Ariel got out of all patience; he stamped about from one side of the wharf to the other, muttering that the Patroon was the worst of all vessels, and the captain the most lazy, slow-motioned, stupid of all blockheads.

"I knew it; I knew it. I'll bet my life he is high and dry on the Overslaugh. No! hey! no; there she comes—there she is at last;" and he darted across the wharf towards her with such enthusiasm that he broke his shins against a post.

Ariel was not mistaken; it was the Patroon, and in a few minutes Madame Vancour and her daughter Catalina were welcomed once more at the fireside of their best friends, with a quiet, speechless warmth which nature dictated and nature understood. All but Ariel spoke through their eyes; but it was the characteristic of that worthy bachelor to make a noise on all occasions of merriment or sadness; the more he felt, the more noise he made, and this propensity followed him even in his sleep, he being a most sonorous and indefatigable snorer in all its varieties. He paraded round the young woman, crying:

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[1] a town and county of New York State. The Five Nations were five tribes of Indians—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas.

"Ahem! Bless me, how you have grown! I shouldn't have known you. Why, a-hem! you're almost as tall as I am!"

And then he measured his little, square, stumpy figure with that of the tall, graceful girl. Finally, having exhausted all his waking noises, he placed himself in an armchair and fell into a sleep, from which he was roused only by the music of setting the supper-table, which above all others was most agreeable to his ear.

"Hey, what have you got for supper—hey?" and he marched round, taking special cognizance of the ample board.

"But where is Sybrandt?" asked Madame Vancour. "I expected, to be sure, he would be here to welcome us home."

"Oh, that's true, Dennis," said Egbert; "what has become of the boy?"

"I can't tell."

Ariel broke into one of his inspiring laughs.

"I can," said he; "the poor fellow sneaked away home as soon as he knew the Patroon was in sight."

Egbert shrugged his shoulders; Dennis twisted a piece of celery with such a petulant jerk that he overturned the whole arrangement of the dish, the pride of Dame Nauntje, presiding goddess of the kitchen. Ariel cried "Ahem!" like a stentor,[1] and Madame and her daughter exchanged significant looks and smiled. Sybrandt appeared not that night, and nothing more was said on the subject.

As the young gentleman is destined to make some figure in our story, we will take this opportunity to introduce him more particularly to the reader's notice.

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[1] Stentor was an ancient Greek who had a very loud voice.

CHAPTER III.

A BASHFUL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

SYBRANDT WESTBROOK was the only son of a distant kinswoman of the Vancour family; once, it was supposed, a great favorite of Mr. Dennis, who had been suspected of something more than a mere liking for the lady. She was a beauty and an heiress, and married a British officer at New York, who dissipated her fortune, and finally went home and never returned. She left an only son without fortune or a protector to his infancy. But he found one in Mr. Dennis Vancour, who, after the death of his wife, took the boy home, adopted him as his son, and superintended his education.

Dennis was a worthy man, with many peculiarities. He cherished the old primitive Dutch manners, and, above all, the old primitive Dutch language, the only one he could now ever be brought to speak, although master of English. He had a great distaste for New York names, modes, and follies. He disliked the new system of education daily gaining ground in the province, and the thousand innovations which its change of masters had introduced. The fashionable young men were coxcombs, and the fashionable young women only fit to dance and make fools of themselves with the redcoats.

For these and other reasons he determined that his adopted son should receive a domestic education under the care of the good Dominie[1] Stettinius, pastor of the congregation. The dominie was a stanch pillar of the Reformed Dutch Church, a profound scholar, and a man of great piety as well as simplicity of character. He was bred at the famous university of Leyden,[2] that renowned seminary where Grotius,

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[1] a word used in Scotland for *schoolmaster*, from the Latin *dominus*, a lord or master.

[2] (*pron.* lī′den) a town in Holland.

Grævius, and a thousand other illustrious scholars were educated; and where a thousand illustrious masters presided from time to time. He had been a laborious student, and was now a ripe scholar. But he possessed no one accomplishment except learning, nor had he a respect for any other; his manners were simple, almost rustic; and such was the sobriety of his notions, that, though a kind-hearted being as ever existed, he could hardly tolerate the smiles, the gayety, and the gambols of happy childhood.

This worthy divine, by desire of Mr. Dennis Vancour, took the entire charge of Sybrandt at the age of seven years, and made a great scholar of him at nineteen. The good man was so zealous in plying him with books that he forgot men, and the consequence was that the youth grew up a shy, awkward, reserved being, without the vivacity of his age, and ignorant as a child of that knowledge of the world which is essential to the every-day transactions of life. There was nothing on the face of the earth he was so much afraid of as a woman, particularly a young woman, whose very presence seemed to turn him into stone, and lock up the springs of thought as well as action.

The person and aspect of Sybrandt were eminently handsome, but his manners and address deplorably rustic and ungainly. When addressed abruptly, his awkward embarrassment had the appearance of stupidity; and such were his habits of abstraction that he often gave the most silly answers imaginable. Thus he grew up with little to recommend him to the respect or affection of his fellow-creatures around but a sort of harmless stupidity, which the good dominie was pleased to call the gravity of wisdom. His vivacity was entirely repressed by hard studies, want of company and relaxation, reinforced by the stern gravity of the worthy Stettinius, who plied him with tasks day and night.

Assuredly learning is a thing of almost inestimable value; but it may be bought too dearly. Knowledge should only keep pace with the natural growth of the human faculties. If it comes to exceed the powers of the mind, and to be too great for the grasp of our reason and judgment, the overburdened intellect becomes but an ass, laden with treasures of no use to the bearer, and calculated only to oppress the wholesome vigor and vivacity of nature.

Sybrandt had seen but little of Catalina, his cousin (for so they used to style each other), previous to her being sent to the boarding-school, and less of her from that time. True, the young lady spent her vacations at home, but Sybrandt was either too hard at his studies, or too bashful to be much in her company. When this happened, he was pretty certain to be more than commonly stupid and embarrassed, so that Catalina had long set him down as little better than a sleepy country bumpkin. The youth had anticipated her arrival and final sojourning at her father's mansion as an event of great interest to him. True, he felt convinced in his own mind that he should never dare to look her full in the face, or enjoy either ease or pleasure in her society. Yet still her abode so near him would furnish a new and charming object for his solitary contemplations. He was excessively anxious to see her, and punctual in his attendance at the mansion house while the storm lasted and there was no immediate prospect of the young lady's arrival; but the moment the Patroon came in sight his heart failed him, and he retreated into the fields, there to enjoy an imaginary meeting which he dared not encounter in reality. Mr. Dennis Vancour was somewhat indignant at the ignominious retreat of Sybrandt, to whom he delivered a Dutch lecture that very night on his sheepishness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BOOK.

Not long after Catalina's arrival home, an incident occurred which occasioned a great sensation, not only in the city of Albany, but for many miles around. This was the arrival of a regiment of British troops from New York, in consequence of expected hostilities between France and England, whose wretched rivalry generally involved the four quarters of the globe in war and bloodshed. A large portion of the officers of this regiment were gay young men without families, and the belles and mothers of the belles in and about Albany saw in the newcomers a mark on which to exercise the influence of the charms of the one and the arts of the other.

The colonel of the newly arrived regiment was gallant and well born; he tacked "honorable" to his name, and that alone was sufficient to consecrate him in the eyes of the provincial ladies. His name was Sydenham; he was somewhat of a coxcomb, and his exterior was prepossessing, especially in a red coat and epaulettes. His courage was undoubted. He did not want for a reasonable degree of scholarship, and was not ignorant of books; but his greatest acquisition consisted in a consummate knowledge of the world, a manner which enabled him to be particularly pleasing whenever he chose. The rest of the officers were nearly all alike, as much so as so many boiled lobsters. They all wore red coats, and all thought themselves of a different species from the honest burghers.

The mansion house of the Vancours had ever been open to all respectable strangers, and especially to the military men who frequently sojourned there on their passage from New York to the frontier posts and back again. Independently of the hospitality of the house, the situation of the elder Vancour as a public man, together with his extensive acquaintance with the interests of the colony, and his singular influence over the Indians, naturally made his house the resort of the principal officers of the government, with whom his opinions always had great weight. Accordingly, we soon find the colonel and his officers, as it were, domesticated at the old mansion house, riding the colonel's horses, feasting on his excellent fare, pronouncing him a decent sort of an old curmudgeon, and never quizzing the good gentleman but at their messes.

The arrival and sojourning of these gay sparks created a mighty sensation in that part of the country, and in a little time produced great innovations in the simple habits of the people. Heretofore not a dog dared bark after eight o'clock in their quiet retreats, except as a signal that the wild man or the wild beast was coming. But now, "preserve us!" as the good Dominie Stettinius exclaimed with lifted hands, "half the night was spent—yea, even to nine and ten o'clock—in dancings and junketings."

Colonel Sydenham had served in India, which was a fortunate circumstance, as it enabled him to ascribe his gray hairs, and the evident debility of his person, to the effects of a climate which, as he frequently observed, seldom failed to produce an appearance of premature old age. "I was gray at twenty," said the colonel, who would never use spectacles or carry a walking-stick on any occasion, though never man stood in greater need of both these useful auxiliaries.

The colonel early singled out Catalina as the object of his attentions. She was the fairest lady of the land in which he sojourned; and she was a great heiress, for she was the only child of a man who owned land enough to entitle him to vote at a German Diet.[1] The colonel and Catalina were on the best possible terms, and in no long time the good people of the neighborhood all agreed that it would be a match.

One night a little party had collected at the Vancours', consisting of the gallant Colonel Sydenham, two or three of his officers, the noisy Ariel, and the daughters of half a score of the most substantial burghers of Albany. A furious thunderstorm had come on in the early part of the evening, and it was settled that the whole party should remain all night where they were, to the great delight of Uncle Ariel, whose soul expanded with indescribable satisfaction at the thought of a merry party and a social supper. The colonel happened to be describing a dish of boiled fowl and rice common in the East Indies, which struck Ariel's fancy wonderfully. He disappeared shortly afterward, and continued to pass in and out of the room occasionally, without being particularly noticed by anybody, for he never could be quiet when anything was going forward about the house.

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[1] a German legislative assembly. In former times the possession of a certain amount of property in land was one of the qualifications of a member of a Diet.

"Sybrandt," said Madame Vancour, with the good-natured intention of rousing him from the chaos of stupidity in which he had remained bewildered for a long time—"Sybrandt, pray come and assist us in finding out what this means." They had gathered about the table, on which lay a number of books, into which some were looking, while others were talking about various matters.

"'Tis Greek," said one.

"'Tis Hebrew," said another.

"'Tis High Dutch,"[1] said a third.

"'Tis Mohawk," said a fourth, and each one had a different opinion.

"Let me see," cried Ariel, who just at the moment entered with a face as red as fire. He pulled out his specs, rubbed them carefully, placed them across his little snub of a nose, and began to pore over the mystery. He could make nothing of it.

"Colonel," cried he to Sydenham, who had rather affected to be deeply engaged with Catalina—"Colonel, here, you understand Hindu and all that; interpret for us."

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[1] the German language as spoken by the educated, *Low Dutch* being the dialect of the uneducated or lower classes.

The rest joined in the entreaty, and the book being handed to the colonel, he proceeded with great gravity to study it upside down.

"Why, Colonel," shouted Ariel, "you're holding the book upside down. Here, take my spectacles. I see your eyes begin to fail you as well as mine."

The colonel would rather have marched up to a loaded cannon, or stopped a red-hot ball, than use spectacles in the presence of any living soul but his valet, in whose discretion he placed unbounded reliance. In his solicitude to remedy the blunder so unceremoniously proclaimed by Ariel, he unluckily placed the cover of the book towards him, while he rejected the spectacles with a smile and a bow, both indicating he had no occasion for them.

"Why, Colonel," shouted Ariel again, and breaking into an explosion of laughter; "why, you've got the book with the back towards you this time. I insist on your taking my spectacles. I'm sure they will suit you exactly. You and I are just about of an age."

And he continued to press the colonel to accept of them, till the good gentleman could hardly command his faithful auxiliaries, the smile and the bow. It was, however, a maxim with him never to show either anger or mortification in company. He contented himself with quietly handing the book to Sybrandt, saying he must acknowledge his ignorance of the passage, which, by the way, he had not been able to distinguish, from the failure of his eyes. But this was a secret he kept to himself, preferring rather to be thought ignorant than blind. The whole company gave him credit for affecting to be unable to see merely to disguise his not being able to interpret the passage, which, as Sybrandt announced, was nothing more than an English proverb, printed in Greek characters, as we have seen practiced, in the way of a grave quiz, in some of the old specimens of printing.

This little incident raised Sybrandt in the scale of comparison with the colonel, especially in the estimation of Catalina, who inherited from her mother that respect for useful acquirements which is one of the best evidences of good sense.

The colonel's spirits seemed to flag not a little after the adventure of the book, while those of poor Sybrandt gained a corresponding elevation; for it is the characteristic of such sensitive beings as he to be about as unreasonably inflated as they are unreasonably mortified by trifles which to others seem perfectly insignificant. Nevertheless, there was rather a dullness coming over the party which, however, was soon diverted.

A pause in the storm without, and the conversation within, was interrupted by the loud sound of voices in the direction of the kitchen, a detached building about fifty yards in the rear of the house, with which it was connected by a covered way. The voices seemed to be engaged in hot contention, and presently Ariel came bouncing into the room, his face in a blaze, exclaiming, "The old wooly-headed fool! She knows no more about cooking than a Mohawk Indian." The whole company expressed anxiety to know the cause of this violent irruption, and Ariel accordingly proceeded to explain.

CHAPTER V.

AN EAST INDIA DISH.

THERE reigned in the kitchen of Mr. Vancour an African queen, whose authority, by virtue of long and vigorous assertion, was paramount to that of the mistress of the establishment and all other persons. Her complexion was of the highest order of perfection, according to the standard of Guinea;[1] for nothing in the human shape was so irresistibly black as the skin of Aunt Nauntje, as she was called by the family, young and old. She was the mother of three generations of blacks, who all appertained to the establishment. The boys at the time of their birth were given to some one of the young white members of the family, to whom they continued especially attached all their lives; and the girls were in like manner considered the property of the young ladies, who attended strictly to their conduct, and taught them to be useful as well as virtuous.

It was gratifying in those days to see the interest which these old and faithful retainers took in the affairs of their master, and the manner in which they, as it were, identified their own characters and consequence with his. The master and mistress were not afraid to go a journey and leave the house in charge of one of these, for they knew it would be even more carefully attended to than if they were at home.

Aunt Nauntje was despotic in the kitchen. Where she acquired her art I know not, but tradition says that the dishes she concocted had a rich and triumphant relish, which tickled the palate mightily, and seduced the worthy Ariel into occasional imprudent feats of the trencher.

Ariel, among his other accomplishments, such as grafting apple trees, bleeding horses, and ringing pigs' noses, was an amateur in the noble art of cookery. He never could keep out of the kitchen when there was a feast in preparation; and many is the time Aunt Nauntje did violently expel him, by dint of flourishing the gridiron, the toasting-fork, or some such formidable weapon. Indeed, something like a feud raged between them ever since Ariel had denounced her as "a stupid fool of a Guinea nigger," for having committed the enormity of roasting wild pigeons without any stuffing.

When Ariel heard Colonel Sydenham describe the famous

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[1] a country of Africa, the natives of which are negroes.

East India dish of boiled chicken and rice, which he did with a commendable minuteness, he pricked up his ears, and thought to himself he would go and make interest with Aunt Nauntje to surprise the colonel with a facsimile. Accordingly, as I have before noted, he disappeared as soon as the colonel had finished his detail, and sallied forth for the empire of Queen Nauntje, who was busily engaged in cooking a jolly, old-fashioned meal for a company of healthy, hearty folks who had dined at one o'clock, and could therefore afford to eat supper.

"Aunt Nauntje, my good soul," said Ariel, "I want you to try your hand at a famous dish I have just heard of from Colonel Sydenham."

"Ah," said Nauntje, "Massa *Auriel* always some crinkum-crankum in he head 'bout new dishes. Well, what is he?"

"Why, a dish of boiled fowl and rice, dressed with curry. You know the colonel gave you a bottle the other day."

Nauntje began to spit. "Curry—eh!—stuff just fit for a hog or an Indian."

"Well, but you know, Nauntje," said Ariel, coaxingly, "you know you are not obliged to eat it. Now do, my dear soul, try, for the sake of the colonel, will you?"

"Colonel, ah! Wish him a hundred miles off, wid all he crew of redcoats. Eat massa out of house an' hum bum-by."

"Well, but your mistress will be pleased with it. Come now, and the next time I go to Albany I'll bring you a new pipe, a paper of tobacco, and a row of pins."

To please her mistress and get the reward promised by Ariel, Aunt Nauntje at length consented to try her skill at the outlandish dish, and Ariel was delighted beyond measure. He was in and out of the kitchen every five minutes, giving directions and finding fault, until it was with great difficulty she refrained from having resort to the gridiron or the toasting-fork. As it was, she almost broiled with indignation at this attempt to overrule and insult her in her own proper dominion. At length the great attempt was nearly brought to a crisis, and Ariel solicited and obtained permission to taste the eminent concoction. But what pen can depict his indignation when he discovered that, in spite of all his cautions and injunctions, Aunt Nauntje, who had a passion for onions, had poisoned the whole affair by a most powerful infusion of that ungenteel vegetable production! Ariel was confounded, thunderstruck, and indignant. He ejected the villanous compound into the fire, exclaiming:

"I'll be shot if the stupid old fool hasn't put onions in it!"

Whereupon Aunt Nauntje forgot the new pipe, the paper of tobacco, and the row of pins. She seized the mortal gridiron, pursued Ariel with a speed which seemed almost supernatural when contrasted with her appearance of extreme old age, and drove him, as we have before related, triumphantly before her into the parlor, at the door of which she stopped for a moment, brandishing the gridiron, and then retired grumbling to her stronghold again.

It is due to the reputation and the memory of Aunt Nauntje to state that the dish was brought up with the rest of the supper, and pronounced by the colonel to be equal to anything of the kind he had ever tasted in India; by which righteous decision he forever established himself in the good graces of that high-seasoned and high-seasoning divinity.

The supper went off gayly, in spite of the discomfiture of Uncle Ariel, who soon recovered his good humor, for he was not one of those impracticable churls who quarrel with the good things of this life and retain their anger at the same time they are gratifying their appetites. The worthy Dominie Stettinius was heart-struck the next day, when he learned that the party had prolonged its sober revels until the clock actually struck the half-hour between eleven and the very witching time of midnight.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. DENNIS IS SURPRISED.

In the days of which we are speaking, the young men bordering on the frontiers were accustomed almost universally to commence the business of this world with a trading voyage among the savages of the borders. Previous to assuming the port and character of manhood, it was considered an almost indispensable obligation to undertake and complete some enterprise of this kind, replete with privations and dangers. The youth went out a boy and returned a man, qualified to take his place among men, and to aspire to the possession of the object of his early love. It was in this way that the character of the patriarchs of this country was formed; and by these means that it exhibited a union of homely simplicity, manly frankness, and daring enterprise, which at length found their reward in the achievement and possession of liberty.

Without consulting any human being, the morning after the supper we have just recorded, Sybrandt abruptly requested of Mr. Dennis Vancour the permission and the means to make an adventure among the Indians of the northwest. Mr. Dennis was not astonished, for he was a genuine Dutchman; but he was much surprised at this abrupt application.

"Why, hang it, boy," said the good man, "what is the use of it? You know you will have enough when I am gone, and while I live you can want nothing. You had better stay at home and study with the dominie."

"But I cannot study now. I—" and here Sybrandt faltered and was silent.

"What, you are tired, boy? Well, I don't much wonder at it. I always had a great respect for learning, but somehow or other I could never get over the awe with which it inspired me. I always kept at a distance from it. But are you determined? Won't you flinch, boy, when it comes to the point?"

"Never fear me, uncle"—and he clenched his fingers involuntarily—"never fear me."

"Well, then, you shall have what you ask of me. I like thy spirit, boy. It was so I began life, and so shall you. Fifty years ago I took a canoe and fifty dollars' worth of goods and old Tjerck, then but a lad, and away I went right into the woods, where at that time, I believe, no white man had ever been before me and returned alive. The Indians were not such good hands at making bargains as they are now, and I returned with five hundred dollars' worth of furs. But who shall go with you? I have it—old Tjerck is the very man."

"I am afraid he is too old, sir."

"Not he, not he, boy. He is as tough as hickory. He'll tire you out and starve you out, any time, I warrant you. Besides, he speaks the Mohawk language."

So it was settled that old Tjerck should be the squire of our new errant of the woods and wilds. A few days sufficed for preparations. As many Indian goods as could be conveniently stowed in a light bark canoe, a small quantity of provisions, two rifles, or perhaps muskets, with the necessary ammunition, and two stout hearts constituted the outfit for this wayfaring in the wilderness.

When Catalina heard of the contemplated adventure of our hero, she mused in silence on the subject for hours, without being able to decide whether to be angry or sorry. She ascribed his omission to apprise her of what was going forward to neglect and indifference. Under this impression she determined to meet him, if he came at all, without any appearance of surprise or regret at his sudden resolution. She received him without expressing either, or betraying a single spark of curiosity or solicitude about the length of his stay or the course of his voyage. She even jested on the subject, and begged him to exercise his scholarship on teaching the Indians Greek and Latin.

The interview became exceedingly painful to Sybrandt. He would have given the world to be out of the room, yet was riveted to the spot by that mysterious fascination which awkwardness and pride and sensibility exercise over the power of motion. At last, however, with a desperate effort he arose and muttered his farewell. At that moment Catalina remembered that he was of her own kin, and that he was going whence he might never return.

"Sybrandt," said she, in a voice which these recollections had softened into kindness, "what shall I give you to remember me by in the woods?"

After a moment's pause she drew from her pocket a golden coin—we believe it was a Dutch ducat—and continued, with a tone and look of saddened vivacity:

"Take this. You can make a hole in it, and tie it round your neck as a talisman against Indian witchcraft. Farewell, Cousin Sybrandt, and remember that—that Dominie Stettinius will regret your absence."

CHAPTER VII.

PASKINGOE, THE ONE-EYED.

EARLY next morning, ere the tints of the bright morning reddened the eastern sky, or the birds had left their perches among the clustering foliage, all things being ready, Sybrandt launched his light canoe on the smooth mirror of the Hudson, and, assisted by old Tjerck, paddled away upward towards the sources of that majestic river.

The first day they occasionally saw, along its low, luxuriant borders, some scattered indications of the footsteps of the white man, and heard amid the high, towering forests at a distance in the uplands the ax of the first settler, the crash of the falling tree, the barking of the deep-mouthed hound, and the report of a solitary, distant gun, repeated over and over by the echoes, never perhaps awakened thus before. A rude hut, the first essay towards improvement upon the Indian wigwam, appeared here and there at far intervals along the shores, the image of desertion and desolation, but teeming with life and living souls.

As they passed along, the little half-clothed, white-haired urchins poured forth by dozens, gazing and shouting at the passing strangers. Gradually these evidences of the progress of that roving, adventurous race which is sending forth its travelers, its merchants, its scholars, its warriors, and its missionaries, armed with the sword and the Bible, into every region of the peopled earth, ceased altogether. There was silence on the earth, on the waters, and in the air, save when the voice of nature spoke in the whirlwind, the thunder, and the raging of the river when the full-charged clouds poured their deluge into its placid bosom.

Night, which in the crowded haunts of men is the season of silence and repose, was here far more noisy than the day. It was then that the prowling freebooters of the woods issued from their recesses to seek their prey and hymn their shrill or growling vespers to the changeful moon or the everlasting stars. As they toiled upward in the moonlight evenings, against the current, which every day became more rapid as they proceeded towards the falls,[1] they were hailed from the shore at intervals by the howl of the wolves, the growling of the bears, and the cold, cheerless quaverings of the solitary screech-owl. When, tired with the labors of the day, they drew their canoe to the shore and lay by for the night, their only safety was in lighting a fire and keeping it burning all the time. This simple expedient furnishes the only security against the ferocious hunger of these midnight marauders, who stay their approach at a certain distance, where they stand and howl, and glare with their eyes, a mark for the woodsman, who takes his never-failing aim directly between these two balls of living fire.

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[1] Falls of Fort Edward, mentioned next page.

But the labors of our hero's voyage were far greater than the dangers. He and his trusty squire had to breast the swift current from morning until night, and win every foot of their way by skill and exertion combined. Sometimes the current swept through a long, narrow reach, between ledges of rocks that crowded it into increasing depth and velocity; at others it wound its devious way by sudden, abrupt turnings, bristling on every side with sharp projections either just above or just below the surface; and at others they were obliged to unload their little bark, and carry its freight fairly round some impassable obstruction.

In this manner they proceeded, winning their way inch by inch, watching with an attention, an anxiety never to be relaxed for a moment without the danger, nay, the certainty, of the shipwreck of their frail canoe, the loss of their cargo, and the disgrace of an unsuccessful voyage. This last was what every young man feared beyond all the dangers and privations of his enterprise. It was a death-blow to his reputation, as well as his future prospects; for not a rural damsel would condescend to waste a smile upon a youthful admirer who had failed in his first adventure. The two qualities most valued among these good people were courage and prudence; and it argued a want of both of these when he lost his boat and his cargo, or stopped short of a good market among the men of the woods.

At length, on the fourth day, towards evening, they were warned by a distant, dull, monotonous, heavy sound, of their approach to the falls of Fort Edward, as they were then called, at that time a frontier post.

"Hark, Massa Sybrandt," said Tjerck, as he paused from plying his ceaseless paddle—"hark, I hear him!"

"Hear what?" replied the other.

"The falls, massa. Maybe we find some Indians dare to trade wid."

Sybrandt listened, and could plainly distinguish the leaden plunge of the river, gradually becoming more distinct as the canoe made its way up the stream, which now began to whirl about in boiling eddies, each crowned in its centre with a cap of snow-white foam. Turning a projecting point, they met the full force of the current, which, spite of all their efforts, jerked the bow of the light canoe completely round, and shot her, like an arrow from a bow, out into the middle of the river. Finding it impossible to proceed any farther in this way, they landed, and commenced the laborious task of unlading and carrying their merchandise and canoe round the falls to meet the placid current above.

While thus occupied, they encountered a party of Mohawks, who had come thither to fish, headed by a chief called Paskingoe, or the one-eyed. He was a tall, athletic savage, six feet high, of a ferocious appearance and indifferent character. He had lost an eye in some drunken brawl; and having mixed a good deal with the white men, exhibited the usual effects of such an intercourse, in a combination of the vices of both races. Cunning, avaricious, and revengeful, he still had sufficient mastery over his feelings to disguise them when occasion required, except under the influence of intoxication; then his bad passions became ungovernable, and his rage without discrimination or control. It was said he had killed his own son in one of these bloody paroxysms, under pretence that he was undermining his influence with the tribe. He was sitting, with his party of four Indians besides himself, under the shade of a clump of pines that nodded over the foaming torrent, when Sybrandt and Tjerck, suddenly and unexpectedly to themselves, came full upon them. The Indians had seen them coming up the river afar off, with a keenness of vision they possess, perhaps, beyond even the animals of the forest.

"Welcome, brother," said the chief to Sybrandt.

"Ah, Paskingoe, how you do?" said Tjerck, who had known him before. "I no tink to see you here; and I no glad neither," added he aside to himself.

There was little ceremony practiced in these interviews between the traders and the Indians. Sybrandt inquired for furs, and the chief asked what he had to exchange for them. Finding that Sybrandt had brought with him two or three kegs of that poison which has swept away the race of the red men, and seems almost on the eve of doing the same to the whites, Paskingoe became very earnest with him to go to the junction of the Hudson with the Sacandaga, where he said he had plenty of people who would exchange commodities.

Tjerck shook his head, and Sybrandt paused.

"What, is my brother afraid?" said Paskingoe. "Is not the Mohawk the friend of the white man?"

"I am not afraid; but——"

"Huh!" said Paskingoe; "when I go to the fort, I will tell them I met a white man who dared not go to the Sacandaga because he heard an old owl screech," alluding to the shrugs and motions of old Tjerck. "My brother will get no beavers unless he goes to Sacandaga. He will go home as he came, and the young women will laugh at him."

Sybrandt thought of Catalina, and determined to go with the chief. The Indians assisted him in carrying his canoe and merchandise round the portages at Fort Edward and Glens Falls; and though they cast many a longing look at the kegs of rum, throwing out many shrewd hints at the same time, they neither stole nor took any of it by violence.

At length, after a toilsome voyage, they reached the junction of the two rivers, where neither was a hundred yards wide. It was a wild, solitary region, entirely out of the usual route of travelers, who either followed the course of the Mohawk River, or left the Hudson at Fort Edward, and struck across the high hills to the end of Lake George on the way to Canada. The nearest settlement was at Johnstown, towards the south, where Sir William Johnson resided, and exercised that sway over the tribes of Indians far and near which still remains, and will remain forever, a subject of admiration and wonder.

There were neither Indians nor beaver-skins at the station, as promised by Paskingoe, who, by closely examining the grass, ascertained, as he said, that the party had gone away a day or two before towards the fishing-house. This was a small lodge built at the head of one of the branches of the Sacandaga, by Sir William Johnson, who sometimes came there from Johnstown to hunt and fish. Paskingoe assured Sybrandt he would find them not far from the lodge, which, being unoccupied great part of the time, the Indians occasionally slept in when the weather was bad.

If any idea of danger crossed the mind of Sybrandt, it was coupled with the conviction that if Paskingoe had any bad designs he could execute them just as well where he was as at the place where he wished him to go. He therefore consented to accompany him, notwithstanding all the eloquence of old Tjerck, who, by signs and looks, attempted to dissuade him. Accordingly, early the next morning they embarked on the sluggish Sacandaga, the Indians in their canoe, and Sybrandt with his trusty squire in his, and paddled their way along the devious windings of the lazy solitary stream, that seemed a vast serpent asleep in the high grass that skirted its banks.

Sybrandt felt his solitary situation, which became gradually more disagreeable from his seeing, or imagining he saw, certain looks of equivocal meaning pass between Paskingoe and his Indians. On one occasion, turning suddenly round, he observed the one-eyed chief shake his head in answer to an inquiring look of one of his companions, and point in the direction where, peering above the dead level of the meadow, stood the little rustic fishing-house. Towards evening they approached the head of the navigation of the stream, close by which stood the building. For some time before, the dull flashes of the lightning, followed at lazy intervals by the distant chit-chat thunders, rumbling and muttering, had indicated the approach of a storm.

At length, just as they arrived at a little rude landing-place, where Sir William Johnson launched his canoe when going on a fishing-match, the distant waving of the pine forest, which here bordered in majestic gloom and grandeur on the edge of the wide meadow, and the pattering drops of rain, announced that the crisis was approaching rapidly. There was only time for Sybrandt to cover his merchandise carefully, ere it came in torrents on the wings of a wind that laid flat the rank high grass and made the forest groan. The party made the best of their way to the fishing-house, the door of which was opened without ceremony, there being no one in it, and no furniture requiring a guard.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

For some time there was a dead silence among the party. Paskingoe was moody, and Sybrandt, seeing no traces of the Indians he expected to meet at this spot, from time to time eyed him with looks of suspicion. He could not help believing his designs were at least questionable, nor disguise from himself that he was entirely at the mercy of the Indians.

"My brother thinks I have two tongues and two faces," said the one-eyed chief at last, in a sarcastic tone.

Sybrandt made no answer.

"The white man," continued Paskingoe, raising his voice, "does not know what to say; he is afraid to speak out. If I tell him the Indians and the beavers will come to-morrow he will not believe me. Why should I lie to him? Is he not a muskrat caught in a trap?"

Sybrandt felt it was true; he was completely in the power of the Indian. Hardly knowing what to say, he continued silent. The evening was now setting in, and the wind roared through the pines, the lightning flashed almost incessantly through the windows, accompanied by loud peals of thunder, and now and then the crash of a falling tree gave token of a triumph of the angry elements. Paskingoe sat in moody silence, smoking his pipe; Sybrandt was occupied in no very pleasing reflections on his awkward situation; and old Tjerck, from long experience of the Indian character, saw that mischief was at work in the breast of the one-eyed chief.

"Is not the white man and the black-white man hungry?" at length he said. "Has he anything good in his canoe? Let him send for it, and we will eat together."

Sybrandt had no disinclination to this proposal, and Tjerck was despatched with one of the Indians to bring in some provisions from the canoe. While they were gone the One-eye ordered his people to kindle a fire, which they did with some difficulty, and the room at length became illuminated with the red glare of the pine knots that hissed in the chimney. In a little while Tjerck and the Indian returned, bringing the provisions which our voyagers had laid in, together with two guns which had been left in the canoe. The eye of Paskingoe flashed fire.

"Is the white man afraid of the bears and wolves tonight?"

"I brought 'em for fear he get wet," said old Tjerck. As the One-eye placed his blind side towards them Tjerck dexterously handed Sybrandt a knife which he had concealed under his homespun linen frock, and which the young man as dexterously hid in his bosom. The meal being now prepared, they sat down to partake of it. After finishing, the One-eye asked Sybrandt:

"Has the white man any fire-water[1] in his canoe?"

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[1] meaning rum or whisky.

"I have," replied Sybrandt.

After a pause of some minutes the chief asked:

"Is it good?"

"It is."

"When the white man comes among us," said the chief, "we offer the best we have. We don't hide away our corn, and give him the husk. That is what you white men call nigger."

"No more nigger dan yourself," muttered old Tjerck.

"Some drink would be very good," said One-eye. "I am dry."

Tjerck politely handed him a horn-cup of water, which he dashed on the floor, while his countenance began to exhibit keen anger and impatience.

"If the white man won't give, will he sell? The Great Manitou[1] has promised me some fire-water to-night. I dreamed so last night. Will the white man trade for some fire-water?"

Sybrandt felt the peculiar delicacy of his situation, thus buried alone in the depths of the wild solitudes of the Sacandaga. He knew the danger of declining, as well as complying with the wishes of Paskingoe. To refuse entirely would be to provoke his violence; to give him a moderate portion of spirits would probably but render him eager for more; and to afford the means of intoxication would be only the prelude to violence and murder. During these reflections the anger and impatience of the whole party became so evident that he at length determined to gratify them with a small quantity, in the hope that they would be satisfied. He accordingly sent Tjerck for a bottle which he had laid aside to treat the old man now and then. Tjerck shook his head, and obeyed with manifest unwillingness.

"It is good," said One-eye, as he took a deep draught, and handed it to the Indian next him. "It is good, but the water is very shallow; the Indian sees the bottom too easily."

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[1] the Great Spirit or God of the Indians.

And indeed by the time it had gone round the bottle was empty. Sufficient had, however, been swallowed to waken the sleeping demon that every drop of liquor conjures up in the heart of an Indian. As it mounted into their brains they became clamorous for more, and Sybrandt saw that his life would fall a sacrifice to refusing any longer. Accordingly a small keg was brought from the canoe, and the Indians set in for a complete savage drinking feast.

In a little time their howlings and shoutings almost overpowered the uproar of the elements without, and their uncontrolled animal spirits found vent in grimaces, boastings, and antics of mingled ferocity and buffoonery. Their eyeballs glared, they danced, and sang, and flourished their tomahawks and scalping-knives over the head of Sybrandt, who stood in a corner, his right hand in his bosom, grasping his knife, in momentary expectation that that deep and never-dying hatred the Indian cherishes for the white man would precipitate them into some act of violence against him. He kept his eye steadily and fearlessly upon Paskingoe, who was now half-mad, recounting, with violent gesticulations, and tones of crack-brained, ferocious triumph, the number of white men he had butchered, of their wives and children he had scalped, of their homes he had burned.

He told how he had gone alone by himself to a town of the Hurons, which he entered at midnight, and murdered every soul in one of the wigwams; after which he retired, without leaving any traces, into the woods, and secreted himself. The next night he came again, and murdered the people of another wigwam, retiring as before into the woods without being seen. The third night he was watched, and pursued before he could achieve his last triumph. But he related, amid the yelling triumphs of his companions, how he escaped from his enemies, and brought home with him twenty-seven of their scalps.

"What white man could do this?" cried he, darting his eye of malignant fire upon Sybrandt. "The white man is a coward and a liar; he cheats us of our lands, and builds forts upon them, from behind which he shoots us down like dogs. He thinks he is our master, and that we are his black negroes, who have nothing we can call our own."

Then brandishing his tomahawk, and dancing, and whirling himself round, yelling at the same time in concert with his companions, he again went on:

"The white man cannot stand before the Indian unless there is two to one. I know it—I—Paskingoe—I know it. At Cataraqui I buried this tomahawk in the skulls of two of the cowards who were running away like deer. At the great water of Ontario I tore out their hearts, and everywhere I go I drag their scalps smoking from their quivering brains, and spit upon them, and grind them under the soles of my feet. They could never look me in the face, and so the cowards tried to escape the fire of my eyes by putting them out. But they shall know me better with one eye than they did with two. Ten scalps have paid for one of my eyes, and ten more shall be paid before I sleep with my fathers."

Gradually, excited by the liquor and the stories of these bloody exploits, the Indians and their chief became raving mad. They quarrelled, and struck at each other with their knives, and thirsted for blood with the instinct of beasts of prey. At length the One-eye shouted:

"Are we fools? Blood must be shed to-night, but not the blood of the Indian. The Great Spirit has sent the white man here to atone for the wrongs of his people. Let him die!"

"Let us drink his blood!" "Let us scorch his brain with red-hot coals!" "Let us tear out his heart!" shouted the yelling fiends, as they brandished their weapons and came towards Sybrandt with foaming mouths and eyes darting fire.

At this moment the soul of the young man bowed to the supremacy of these accumulating horrors; but it sank only for a moment, and regained its level again. He grasped his secret knife, and looked round for his trusty Tjerck, whose dusky form he saw at the moment vanishing out of one of the windows on the opposite side of the room. Thus left alone, he nerved himself for what might follow.

The Indians, with all their hardihood and daring, are chary of their lives; although when it comes to the point, no people of the earth die so coolly. But the point of honor is to achieve their object with as little loss as possible. They therefore advanced warily upon Sybrandt, who stood as warily on the defense. They approached, their knives and tomahawks were raised to strike, and he was just about to spring upon the one-eyed chief, when a loud, long war-whoop was heard apparently close under the window.

"Hush! 'tis the war-cry of the Adirondacks," said Paskingoe.

The Indians suspended their purpose, and listened with breathless anxiety. Nothing was heard but the falling rain, the roaring of the forest, and the rattling thunder.

"The Adirondacks dare not come here; they are women," said the One-eye contemptuously.

Again they resumed their bloody purpose, and again the shrill war-whoop sounded amid the uproar without, and checked them for a moment. Sybrandt thought of retreating, but the single door was barred by the Indians, who stood for a few minutes expecting an attack from without.

"Let us die like warriors," said Paskingoe, and took another drink.

His example was followed by the others, and the renewed draught added fury to their malignant passions.

"The white man is a traitor," they cried. "He has brought the Adirondacks upon us;" and the One-eye aimed a blow with his tomahawk that Sybrandt could not parry.

He warded it from his head, but it fell on his left arm, and disabled it entirely. In dealing this blow, however, Paskingoe, being somewhat unsteady with the liquor he had drunk, stumbled forward, and met the weapon of Sybrandt, which entered his bosom. He fell upon the floor, and the rage of his party became still more intense. They yelled like tortured fiends; and, notwithstanding the cool determination of our hero, a few moments must have decided his fate, when just at the instant that death hovered over him the door of the fishing-house was violently burst open, and a tall, majestic white man in a hunting dress rushed into the room, followed by half a dozen people. The arms of the Indians, the moment they saw him, were arrested, and their weapons remained suspended above their heads.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGER.

THE stranger addressed a few words in the Mohawk language to the stiffened warriors, with an air of indescribable authority. They lowered their weapons and retired to the other extremity of the room, to which he had waved them with his hand. He then advanced towards Sybrandt, now become weak with the loss of blood, and courteously asked an explanation of the scene, which the young man briefly gave. The stranger shook his head, and exclaimed, in a desponding tone:

"Rum—rum—rum! The shame of the white man, the ruin of the red. What can I do with these wretched people when my own do all they can to undo what I have devoted my life to accomplish?"

Then observing that Sybrandt leaned against the wall, and was gradually sinking in his height, he asked, anxiously:

"Are you hurt, sir?"

"I believe I am, sir. I feel no pain, but my left arm seems getting useless;" and overcome by weakness he sank down upon the body of Paskingoe.

The master passion of the dying Indian for a moment animated his waning strength. He grasped his knife between his feeble fingers, and raising his arm, unnoticed in the obscurity of the dark corner, struck a delirious random blow with the last expiring energy of despair. The knife remained sticking upright in the floor, and the Indian chief died with the effort.

"Who is that?" cried the stranger.

"Paskingoe," muttered one of his party; "the chief who gave you his lands, and whom you called brother. Revenge him."

The stranger made no answer, but proceeded to examine into the situation of Sybrandt, who had fainted with loss of blood. He gave a key to one of his attendants, who descended into the cellar, in the wall of which was a secret recess, where were kept a variety of articles necessary to the various privations and accidents incident to traveling or sojourning far from the haunts of men and the conveniences of civilized life. The stranger applied what was proper of these to the case of Sybrandt, who in a short time recovered from his swoon, and was accommodated with a mattress from the receptacle above mentioned. Having seen to all this, the stranger turned to the Indians of Paskingoe's party, who were standing in sullen silence, and demanded the occasion of this fray.

"The white man can tell you. He will make a good story out of it. Ask him," said one of them.

"Very well," replied the stranger. "Take the body of your chief away to his people, that they may bury him. The storm is over. Go; and when you have done this, come to me.. I will see justice done. Go, now, and take care what you do. Take care!"

The Mohawks placed the body of their chief on a rude litter made of the sticks which had been gathered to light the fire, and departed with mournful steps, shouting the monotonous death-song, which gradually died away in the distance till it was heard no more.

The stranger then having ascertained that Sybrandt was in a deep, exhausted sleep, directed all to be kept quiet, and carelessly throwing himself upon the floor, with his cheek supported on his hand, soon fell into a quiet repose, which was shared by all his companions, with the exception of one, who was directed to watch the slumbers of Sybrandt.

The morning dawned bright, clear, and refreshing, finding all safe and well but our hero, whose ailment, however, was nothing but weakness. He would have risen with the rest, but his head grew dizzy, and he obeyed the injunctions of the stranger to remain quiet for that day at least.

"We will pursue the amusement of hunting, the object which, in fact, brought us here so opportunely, and it shall go hard but you shall have some venison for dinner. I would promise you trout, too, but the streams are too much swelled for fishing. Remain quiet, with your old servant, whom I have instructed what to do, and to-morrow my people shall carry you to my home on a litter of green boughs, which is better than all the sedan-chairs."

So saying, he shook hands with Sybrandt, and departed, observing, "You have no fever, I see."

When they were left alone, Tjerck expressed an honest, heartfelt pleasure at the miraculous escape of his young master.

"I did all I could for young massa," said he.

"Yes, you ran away," said Sybrandt, who felt not a little indignant at his desertion.

"Aha, massa," said Tjerck, "who you tink made dat great war-whoop dat stop de rascal One-eye two, tree minute, and save your life, hey?"

"I don't know; the Adirondacks, I suppose."

"Old nigger!" cried Tjerck, laughing with all his might; "old nigger make it."

Sybrandt saw the whole plan, and thanked Tjerck for the prompt diversion he made in his favor, which, by giving time for the coming of the stranger, undoubtedly saved his life. He then gradually died away into the slumber of weakness, while his black guardian angel sat and watched him with the stillness of a dead calm in the wilderness.

His repose was long and deep, and he awoke refreshed and hungry. The stranger and his party returned from their hunt with plenty of game, and Sybrandt was allowed to partake sparingly of the meal which was prepared. He had now leisure to contemplate the person to whom he owed his rescue from the drunken ferocity of the One-eye and his party.

He was apparently about fifty years of age, with a form of the largest and most lofty proportions, a deep ruddy, yet bronzed complexion, and a countenance of a most singular combination of expression. It united those indescribable yet indelible characteristics which seem inseparable from a cultivated intellect, with the careless, fearless daring of one whose life had been passed in the midst of dangers and the enjoyment of unlimited sway.

He wore a hunting dress equally partaking in the modes of savage and civilized man, and, indeed, altogether exhibited a singular confusion of the peculiarities of the two races. His deportment towards Sybrandt was kind, at the same time that his attentions were rather indifferent than very particular. He took upon himself the direction of our hero, his merchandise and affairs, without consulting or seeming to think it worth while to consult him.

"To-morrow, at sunrise," said he, "we shall set out for home. My people will carry you and your baggage. The canoe must be left where it is." Then turning to his people: "Rest, and be ready by break of day."

In a few minutes all was quiet; though, with the exception of Sybrandt, the floor was their bed, and their pillow a knapsack, a log, or perchance a stone.

In the dawn of the morning they set forth in a direction nearly southwest, through a forest of pines, beeches, and maples such as nature produces but once on the same soil, by the exertion of her unimpaired, youthful energies. The litter of boughs in which Sybrandt was placed was carried alternately by the followers of the stranger, and certainly a more easy mode of conveyance was never devised for an invalid.

Rude and silent and monotonous as was the forest through which their journey lay, it was not devoid of gayety or incident. Sometimes the keen eye of one of the party would detect a black squirrel looking down from the topmost branches of one of the towering pines, and barking, as it were, in derision. The leader would then propose some little prize for bringing it down with a single bullet, and without drawing blood. A halt would then be made for the purpose of disputing the prize. Each took his turn, and the object was to strike the bark of the tree with the ball directly where it came in contact with the body of the squirrel, by which he would be stunned, and fall to the ground without any external wound.

Few were capable of this feat on the first trial, and loud were the shouts that echoed through the forest at the successive abortive attempts. When each one had tried without success, the leader would bid them stand aside, and never fail to bring the little animal down without breaking his skin. So, if they met with any difficulties in their march which the strength, skill, or intrepidity of the others could not surmount, he took the lead and conquered every obstacle of nature by superior strength, management, or daring. It was by frequent instances of this sort that the mystery of his unbounded sway over his people was explained to Sybrandt.

CHAPTER X.

AN EMBRYO SETTLEMENT.

ON the evening of the second day they arrived at the residence of the stranger, a few miles from the banks of the Mohawk River. It was a little embryo settlement just struggling forth in the midst of the vast empire of nature, and composed of log cabins, the first remove from the bark huts of the Indians.

"This is the capital of my kingdom," said the stranger. "It is a wide empire, not very populous; but never mind, the time will come."

He welcomed Sybrandt to his house—a large square edifice of hewn pines, the interstices filled with mortar—with that frank hospitality characteristic of everything he said and did, and presented him to his wife and children; the former an Indian woman, the latter a mixture of wild and tame, the perfect images of nature in her finest proportions.

Sybrandt remained at the house of the stranger some weeks ere he entirely recovered from the effects of his wound; and after his recovery, in truth, he was in no haste to go away. It was evident, too, that the stranger did not wish to part with him.

"It is long," said he, "since I have had a companion who could talk with me on subjects connected with my early habits and associations."

Our hero could not refrain from expressing his surprise at seeing a person of his education and accomplishments thus voluntarily become an exile from civilized society to mix with beings so different from himself.

"Why, I don't know," replied he, smiling; "I was tired of the labor of doing nothing. In my own country I was a gentleman, but a gentleman without fortune; and such a one, you know, cannot stoop to be active and useful except in certain professions. It happened that an intimate friend of mine was appointed governor of this province, and the thought struck me that I should have plenty of elbow-room in the New World, and plenty of exercise for my propensity to activity in hunting deer, wrestling with bears, skirmishing with the Indians, and other rural amusements. I proposed to accompany him, and he accepted me as a companion, under the character of his private secretary.

"On our arrival in New York he desired me to sit down and write an account of our voyage and safe arrival to the colonial secretary.[1] Before I had half finished, there was an alarm in the house that a bear had made his appearance in one of the markets, or perhaps, as I believe was the fact, in the only market in the city, which I suppose has grown very much since. I threw down my pen, sallied forth in the crowd, and after a smart skirmish with Sir Bruin, actually killed him with my own hand.

"I was excessively proud of this exploit. 'I suppose you expect to be brevetted,' said his excellency, smiling. Then shaking his head, he added: 'I see you won't do, my good friend. You are cut out for a mighty hunter before the Lord, like honest Nimrod,[2] and not for a secretary. Have you an inclination to go as resident minister among the Mohawks, and become the bear-leader of these wild warriors?'

"He then explained to me that the government had directed him to establish, if possible, an agency somewhere on the banks of the Mohawk, for the purpose of acquiring an influence over these warlike tribes, for whose good graces the governors of Canada and New York had been for a long while contending.

"'What say you, my friend?' said he. 'I think you are the very man. You are about half Indian already; and if you can only make them half white men, you cannot but agree admirably.'

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[1] the member of the government in England having direction of affairs relating to the colonies.

[2] Gen. x. 8, 9.

"The idea caught my fancy wonderfully, and I accepted the offer without hesitation. You, who have lived so near the confines of the dominion of Nature, and mixed with her sons, need not be told the particulars of my coming here, the dangers I encountered, and the obstacles I met and overcame. We shall talk over these some other day. I have already sat still here longer, I believe, than I have done at one time these ten years. So come, Westbrook, 'tis a fine day for a hunt, and you are well enough to join in it."

He then whistled his dogs, who came wagging their tails, as much delighted as their master; furnished Sybrandt with a gun, and his eldest son, a boy about ten years old, with another; and after making all necessary preparations, called his wife, an agreeable-looking Indian woman, with a voice as soft as a flute, and an eye like an antelope.

"Sakia! She is an Algonquin," said he to Sybrandt, "and her name translated into English is 'love.' Sakia, we shall return before night. See that you have something good ready for us."

Sakia went her way smiling and good-humored as a child.

"She is my wife. You look as if you wanted to express your wonder that I have not brought a civilized European lady to share my solitude. But, in truth, what would such a one have done here but fret away her soul into vapors, and pine herself to death, and hang a dead weight upon me and my purposes? But come, we are wasting time. Take care you don't mistake me for a wild animal when we get into the woods, and shoot me. Here, Will, do you go ahead, my boy; and if old Snacks don't behave herself take a whip to her. I give my boys the lead," said he, addressing Sybrandt, "whenever it can be done with safety. It makes them brave and manly."

Our party soon buried themselves in the pathless woods, and continued onward till they struck the banks of a little lake, whose waters were of crystal, and in whose bosom the surrounding verdant banks were reflected with a thousand new and nameless beauties, just as the imagination heightens and adorns the realities of nature.

"Let us sit down here a while," said the stranger. "You seem tired. Or, if you like, you can stay here and fish while Will and I skirt round the lake with our guns. I have brought fishing-tackle with me."

Sybrandt chose this alternative, being somewhat tired; and the stranger and his boy departed with the dogs, to make the tour of the lake, which seemed some half a dozen miles in circumference.

"Lay your gun where you can reach it, in case a deer or a bear comes by," hallooed he from a distance, just as they vanished in the woods.

Influenced by the scene before him, which threw a charming quiet and repose over his whole soul, Sybrandt, instead of engaging in the sport of fishing, continued to contemplate the unadorned, unsullied beauties of nature in this her wild, secluded paradise.

As he sat thus, his fishing materials remained unnoticed at his side, and he neither heard the loud music of the hounds, nor the report of the stranger's gun, from time to time echoing through the woods. His reveries were at length interrupted by the voice of the stranger, sounding cheerfully in his ear, and awakening him to a perception of reality. He came laden with a variety of game, and exclaimed, as he advanced:

"Come, let us away home. I have plenty of game, and you, I dare say, plenty of fish. Let us see what you have caught."

"Nothing," said Sybrandt, coloring a little.

"Nothing! Oh, thou idle or unskillful piscator, what hast thou been doing?"

"Thinking," said the youth, with a sigh.

"Thinking! What has a man to do with thought among the Indians and wild beasts? Action, boy, action is the word here in my empire of shade. Were I to spend my time in thinking, I and my little ones would starve. I have half a mind to give you no dinner to-day."

"I have thought away my appetite already," said the other, somewhat sadly.

The stranger eyed him with a glance of keen inquiry.

"Young man," said he, seriously, "you are a scholar; I have found out that already. But your education, I doubt, is not quite finished. I shall put you through an entire new course, and make a man of you, as well as a scholar. In a few weeks there will be a meeting of the Mohawks at my court. Until then you will have no opportunity to dispose of your merchandise to advantage; and I know well that an unsuccessful Indian trader can never rise among the frontier men, because he is supposed to want both courage, conduct, and perseverance. You must therefore stay with me till after my grand council, and I shall have time to turn over a new leaf with you. You want action, and you shall have it. What say you?"

"My friends will be uneasy at my long absence."

"Oh, if that is all, I am to send a messenger to Albany in a few days, and he will carry a letter for you. So that objection is got over. What say you, is it a bargain?"

"It is," said the other, and the matter was decided.

"And now for home. Oh, how gloriously hungry I am!" And they hied them towards home with long and hasty strides.

The day was far spent when they arrived at the door of the stranger, and found everything prepared for them as he had directed. His Indian wife received him with a smile of gladness, and the children flocked round to welcome him and admire his game. There was little appearance of sentiment, but much good-humored frankness in the meeting.

"Will you have a book to occupy the evening?" said the stranger, when the night had set in. "I have books, but I seldom read them now."

"I had rather hear you talk," said Sybrandt. Looking round and perceiving the Indian wife was absent on her domestic duties, he added, "May I inquire if you don't find your time hang heavy on your hands sometimes, for want of the society you have been accustomed to?"

"Why, no," replied the other; "I cannot say I do. I am never idle in body or mind. Both as a matter of necessity, as well as amusement, I hunt almost every day, which gives me appetite, occupation, and rest when I lie down at night. Besides this," added he, smiling, "I exercise dominion over men. I influence at least, if not direct, the affairs of an invisible people, as it were, hid in these woods; and this gives sufficient occupation to my mind."

"Yet I should suppose you would sometimes feel lost for want of the ordinary intercourse of social life—the interchange of thought—nay, the conflict of opinions and interests, which keeps the world going on its axis round and round forever and ever."

"I am not always alone. The Indians sometimes visit me; but, to be sure, they are no great talkers, except when they make a set speech, when, I assure you, they cut a most respectable figure as orators. But there is never any want of conflicting opinions and interests when the Indian and the white man come in contact. I fear they will never agree. I sometimes almost despair of being able to consummate the plan which has opened itself to my mind during my residence here, and is now become the leading object of my life."

"May I ask what it is?" said Sybrandt.

"To bring the Indians into the circle of civilized life. I cannot but see that if they remain as they are, a distinct ingredient in that great frame of social life which is now spreading itself in every direction, they must perish. Nothing can save them but conforming to the laws and customs and occupations of the whites. I have endeavored to prepare them gradually for this, and for that purpose have endeavored to gain their confidence and establish an influence over them. Yet the truth forces itself on me every moment of my life, and I cannot shut my eyes to it—this influence is founded not on my superiority in the qualifications of a civilized man, but on my capacity to excel even the Indians in war, in hunting, in fatigue, privations, and endurance of every kind. This is the secret of my power. In proportion as I become a savage the savages respect me—no more."

CHAPTER XI.

TWO DREAMS.

The preceding conversation was interrupted by a slight tap at the door, which was straightway opened, and, to the no small dismay of Sybrandt, the party of Indians whose chief had fallen on his dagger and died at the fishing-house, headed by a new chief, silently entered the room in which they were sitting. The stranger received them with courtesy, and motioned them to sit down. They obeyed, and remained without speaking, while they eyed Sybrandt with glances of keen malignant meaning.

"My children come as friends?" said the stranger.

"The red children still love their father," replied the chief; "but they come to tell him he has a snake in his wigwam which they must kill, and take out his teeth."

The stranger started, and turning aside to Sybrandt said:

"How unthinking I have been! I should not have detained you a moment here after you were able to travel."

Then turning to the chief, he replied to him as follows:

"I understand thy meaning."

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"I understand thy meaning."

"'Tis well," said the other.

a hero, or even a person of tolerable reputation, ashamed or afraid to face his equals, setting aside his superiors? There is a glorious effrontery about conscious genius, which causes it to undertake and accomplish objects which to timid, bashful cowards appear beyond the reach of human power."

The word coward grated harshly on Sybrandt's ear, and was appropriated at once to himself by that mental process through which he was accustomed to distill everything into gall and wormwood. The stranger saw the workings of his mind, and went on:

"Nor is the folly of such timid, shrinking girlishness in man less contemptible than its cowardice. It is right, therefore, that he should be laughed at for the one, and despised for the other."

Sybrandt could stand it no longer. He started from his seat, without feeling one spark of awkwardness or timidity in his whole composition.

"Is this language intended for me, sir? Because, if so, it cancels all obligation on my part. No man shall say or insinuate that I am a fool or a coward. Did you or did you not apply these epithets to me?"

"As much as falls to your share in your own honest consciousness, no more," replied the other, with a most provoking indifference.

Sybrandt surveyed him leisurely from top to toe, with an eye of unflinching defiance.

"Farewell, sir, for the present. I am your guest, and you are my benefactor. I would have been grateful to the end of my life for the kindness of your hospitality and the favor of your example; but you have left me nothing now but regrets that I ever accepted the one or benefited by the other."

He was proceeding to quit the house immediately, when he was arrested by a hearty laugh from the stranger.

"Bravo! Good! I honor you, Mr. Westbrook. You have spoken like a high-spirited, honorable gentleman. From my soul I reverence a man of courage. It is not without reason that courage is held the basis of all the virtues, since without it we may be driven from our best resolves by apprehension of the consequences.

"But why," added he, after a pause, "why not act and speak at all times and everywhere with the same manly, free spirit you have just displayed? What I said was but to aid you to 'know thyself,' the most useful of all lessons to man. Hereafter, when you feel yourself shrinking from the encounter of a lady's eye, or a puppy's glance of ridicule, recollect that you have bearded the lion, called Sir William Johnson, in his den, and never fear the face of man or woman from henceforward. Are we friends again?"

Sybrandt grasped the hand of Sir William in silence, and the incident of that day exercised an influence over his future fortunes greater, perhaps, than all the precepts of the worthy Dominie Stettinius.

The time soon arrived when the meeting of the Mohawk chiefs to hold long talks and receive presents was to take place. The relation in which Sir William stood to the Indians was peculiar to these early settlements; when the savages, being numerous and warlike, were able to turn the scale between the mighty French governors of Canada and the puissant governors of New York. It was therefore necessary to conciliate them, in the first place, by presents, and to fortify that influence by working on their consciousness of the superior power or wisdom of the white people.

Perhaps the gentleman of whom we are now speaking exercised in his day a greater personal influence over these wild and wayward sons of the forest than any other white man that ever existed. It was not so much as the representative of the great king over the water[1] that they respected and obeyed him. It was his frankness, integrity, and truth; but still more his courage, and his superiority in hunting, in war,

[1] the King of England.

in action and endurance, in everything which constitutes the pride and glory of savages, that made these people look up to him with unqualified respect and admiration.

It is not my purpose to record the acts and negotiations of Sir William and the council of chiefs. Still less shall I attempt a sketch of their respective orations, which, though they were not so *lengthy* as some we have heard, were very much to the purpose. The departure of the chiefs was speedily followed by that of our hero, who accompanied a courier dispatched by Sir William to New York with an account of the result of the great council.

"I am sorry to lose your society," said Sir William; "I shall miss it much. But action is the life of life, the vivifying spirit of all nature. When I find myself getting low, I shall dash into the woods, and the sight of a deer shall console me for the loss of my friend. Farewell. I hope we shall meet again."

"Do not doubt it," said Sybrandt. "If you do not come to me, I will one day, if I live, come to you. But you will some time or other visit Albany, and then you shall see——"

"Catalina?" said the other, archly. "Well, a fair lady is worth a far visit, and I think I will come to your wedding, if you will give me due notice. Now, God be with you, Sybrandt, and so farewell."

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD SCENES REVIVE OLD HABITS.

THEY parted each with regret, and as Sybrandt proceeded on his journey, he tried to persuade himself he was all, or might be all, Sir William had described.

The little party, consisting of Sybrandt, old Tjerck, and the courier, proceeded to the banks of the Mohawk River, where they embarked in a canoe for Schenectady, then the frontier town of all the western settlements of this goodly State, of which it now constitutes one of the antiquities. They arrived without accident at the town, which, though partly rebuilt, still exhibited deep and melancholy traces of the deplorable massacre and conflagration of 1689, when the French and Indians surprised the inhabitants in their beds and set fire to their habitations.

As Sybrandt approached nearer towards home, he began to feel in anticipation certain decided symptoms of his old disease. He caught himself studying how he should act, and what he should say to his cousin, instead of relying on the circumstances of the moment to direct his conduct. In short, by the time they came to Albany he had forgot the manly remonstrances of Sir William, and instead of the joys of a speedy reunion with his friends, felt only the fears of their anticipated ridicule. As they approached the venerable mansion-house, and saw at a distance its old gray walls, half-hid by towering elms, with chimneys pointing to the skies, Sybrandt actually trembled with conflicting emotions.

It was now just after sunset, and honest Ariel was walking with his niece on the long piazza, which looked towards the river. The scene was lovely and quiet beyond description, and something had carried the thoughts of Catalina to the absence of Sybrandt.

"I wonder," said she, at length, "what has become of cousin Sybrandt. Is it not time that he should be home, and is it not strange no one has heard of him, uncle?"

"Poor fellow!" said the good-natured Ariel, "to be sure it is. I don't wonder at not hearing from him, for you know the mail don't travel in the wilderness. But he ought to have been home some months ago. I am sadly afraid something has happened to him. He was such an awkward fellow; he never could do anything handy or clever."

"Yet he was brave as a lion," said the other, musing.

"I should not be surprised," said Ariel, after a pause, "if he was either murdered or a prisoner to the Indians."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Catalina, lifting up her hands and clasping them together; "God forbid my dear cousin Sybrandt should come to any harm! But who is that coming yonder?"

"Where?" said little Ariel, standing on tiptoe.

"Yonder, on the Albany road—two persons on horseback."

"It must be the colonel and his man. He has been to Albany to-day."

In a few minutes the persons on horseback emerged from the woody glen, through which the road wound its way, at a little distance from the mansion, where they could be more distinctly seen from the piazza.

"One of them seems to have a black face," observed Ariel.

"If it should be old Tjerck!" exclaimed the young damsel eagerly.

"No, no," replied the other, despondingly, "I fear we shall never see either him or his young master again."

By this time the horsemen had dismounted in the dusky evening, and approached the piazza.

"Who can it be?" thought Catalina, while a presentiment fluttered about her heart. Sybrandt had ridden at such a slow, lingering pace that old Tjerck muttered to himself: "If young massa been hunting a bear, he make more hurry dan to see Miss Catalina."

Ariel received the young man with shouts of joy and innumerable honest shakes of the hand; but Catalina, remembering with what leisure he had approached to receive her welcome, repressed the warm, generous impulses of her heart, and gave him a reception so affectedly careless that he felt it in his innermost soul. After receiving the kind congratulations of the rest of the family, he made some excuse for going to see his benefactor, and departed with a mind wounded by the consciousness of folly, weakness, and inconsistency.

"You don't seem glad to get home again," said the good Dennis, observing that Sybrandt was silent and abstracted; "but I suppose you are tired and sleepy. Well, go to bed, and to-morrow you shall tell your story."

Before he was up in the morning, he heard the cheerful voice of Ariel calling upon him to come forth and eat his breakfast, and tell his story, and go over to the mansion-house to see him hive the bees, that he pronounced to be on the eve of emigrating, from the commotion he observed among them the day before.

Accordingly, after breakfast, they rode over to the mansion-house, where Sybrandt was received more to his liking than the night before. Catalina inquired the cause of his long absence, and even condescended to say she felt great uneasiness lest he should have been murdered, or taken captive by the hostile Indians and carried into Canada. The moment she heard the history of the adventure of the fishing-house, and the escape from the Mohawk chiefs, Sybrandt gained a new interest in her eyes. Under the influence of these feelings she treated him with a frank kindness, which gave an ease and freedom to his deportment that made Catalina observe, with a smile, that he had certainly met with a dancing-master in the woods.

Dinner passed off pleasantly, and in the evening Sybrandt and Catalina strolled out upon the lawn, and stood on the low green banks of the gliding river, watching the passing vessels, listening to the melodies of lowing herds, tinkling bells, and all the combination of sweet peaceful sounds in the delicious quiet of a long summer twilight. Sybrandt gradually became inspired by the scene and the occasion; and unlocking, by involuntary degrees, the stores of his mind, delighted, instructed, and almost astonished Catalina with the inspirations of his new-born intellect.

While thus engaged, they saw one of the little black boys come running towards them in great haste, as if something was the matter at home. When he came up, all he could say was to beg Sybrandt to speed to the house, for Hans Pipe the Indian was there very drunk. Accordingly Sybrandt hastened away as fast as possible, leaving Catalina to return at leisure.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN PIPE.

Hans Pipe, as he was called by the country people around, was an Indian of the Algonquin nation, which had been almost exterminated by the Mohawks in a war that happened many years before the period at which we are now arrived. A large portion of their warriors was cut off, and the remnant of the nation obliged to emigrate into Canada, where they were received and protected by the governor-general.

Hans, whose Indian name was Minikoue, or, "I drink," justified this appellation, for he even exceeded his fellows in the Indian devotion to fire-water. He had been taken prisoner by the Mohawks, and rescued from torture by the influence of Colonel Vancour, who endeavored to teach him the habits and manners of civilized life, and to attach him to his family by kindness and protection.

But melancholy consequences resulted from these kind and benevolent intentions. The Indian, in proportion as he lost the habits of the savage, acquired the vices of the civilized man, sharpened to a keener edge by the wild vigor of barbarism and the early absence of the habit of self-restraint. His natural cunning was quickened by the acquirement of some of the practices of the white man; and his natural passions, such as cruelty, revenge, and the love of drinking, strengthened. So Hans Pipe became a drunkard and a vagabond, and was finally turned away from Colonel Vancour's house for having drawn his knife upon one of the black children who refused to bring him another mug of cider. He was too lazy to work, except at trifling jobs, for which he asked nothing but liquor, and to which nothing but liquor could incite him.

It happened that there was no man about the house when Hans Pipe came into the kitchen intoxicated, and, as usual in that situation, insolent and ungovernable. Colonel Vancour had rode out after dinner on a visit of business, the laborers had not yet returned from the fields, and Ariel had sallied forth to expatiate on the delights of the roasted pig to his neighbor Mynheer Frelinghuysen. Sybrandt found the miserable, degraded being brandishing his club, and vociferating for more liquor with all his might. The little black boys were cowering in corners, afraid to run away, and even the redoubtable Aunt Nauntje shrank from asserting her authority in her own peculiar dominion.

Sybrandt at first tried to soothe Captain Pipe, as he called himself, into something like good humor, in hopes he would go away peaceably. But the captain had lost all control of himself, or did not choose to exert it, and answered our hero with brutal threats against the whole household unless his wishes were complied with. As the discussion went on he became so indecently abusive that Madame Vancour and Catalina, whose apprehensions had called them to the spot, were glad to retire out of hearing.

Sybrandt became angry, and at length, finding the captain proceeding to force open a cupboard where he expected to find liquor, he seized him by the shoulders and jerked him back with such force as to send him reeling to the other extremity of the kitchen. The fury of the madman redoubled. He seemed all at once to become steady, and advancing quickly towards Sybrandt, who had no weapon in his hand, he dealt him a blow with his heavy walking-stick, which, had it taken full effect, would have disabled him at once.

Fortunately Sybrandt, though taken by surprise, preserved his head by a quick motion on one side; but the stroke fell on his left shoulder with a force that made him reel. The little black boys cried out with all their might; old Nauntje sallied forth as fast as her limbs could carry her to call for help; and Catalina, uttering a piercing shriek, flew into the house for the colonel's sword, with which she returned in a minute.

But the contest was over before she arrived. Captain Pipe, perceiving his antagonist partly disabled by the blow he had given, and having become infuriated with rage, was now a perfect savage, panting for blood. He drew the long knife which he always wore about him since he was cast off by the colonel, and flourishing it in the air with a shrill demoniac shout, he made a mortal lunge at the heart of our hero, whose only defence was his right arm and the keenness with which he watched the motions of the captain.

The blow was well aimed, but the activity and coolness of Sybrandt enabled him to avert it by darting on one side. The knife passed through his clothes just under the left arm, and at the instant the young man closed with the savage, holding him so tightly that he could not readily extricate his weapon. A momentary yet desperate struggle ensued, which ended in Sybrandt's tripping up the heels of his adversary, and throwing him backwards with such force that he fell upon one of the great andirons in the chimney and lay senseless. The knife remained clenched in his hand, but his eyes were closed, and the blood flowed in torrents from the back of his head. At this moment Catalina returned with the sword.

"The wretch is not dead," said she; "I see the motion of his breathing. He is only practicing one of his savage arts upon you. Dear Sybrandt, take the sword; and—and—do not kill him, but stand on your defense."

The Indian, as Catalina had shrewdly suspected, was only playing the opossum, as the phrase is in old Virginia; that is, only making believe he was insensible. He intended to watch his opportunity, the moment he recovered a little, to jump up and accomplish the destruction of his victim. But the gift of the sword and the caution of Catalina defeated his intention, and engendered in his malignant heart a feeling of intense and bitter vengeance that afterward more than once put the life of that young lady in imminent peril.

The adventure ended in the arrival of some of the neighbors, whom the cries of Aunt Nauntje had brought to her aid, and the depositing of Captain Pipe in prison, where he expiated his violence by a confinement of several months. Here he had full leisure to brood over his revenge and lay his plans for its gratification. When the period of his imprisonment expired, he adopted an entirely new mode of life. He became perfectly temperate, docile, and industrious. By degrees he gained the pity and good-will of the neighborhood, got plenty of work, and saved every penny of his wages.

Colonel Vancour and his family pitied, forgave, and encouraged him, not only by employment, but by various little presents of money and clothes. Among the rest Catalina, although she always shuddered at his approach, presented him with a Bible, which he was constantly found poring over in his hours of leisure, for he had been taught to read while under the patronage of Colonel Vancour. He constantly attended church, and became a communicant, to the great delight of many pious, well-meaning people, who viewed him as a brand rescued from the fire.

But old Tjerck, who had once been a prisoner in his youth among the Indians, shook his wise gray head, and often said:

"He no good Christian; not he. I see de debbil Indian in he eye yet. When Indian most good, den he going to be most worst. I know him; he like de painter[1]—he most quiet when he jist going to jump."

But a white prophet has little honor in his own country, much less a black one.[2]

[1] meaning panther.

[2] see Matt. xiii. 57.

CHAPTER XV.

A SUSPICIOUS OCCURRENCE.

When Captain Pipe had saved money enough for the purpose, he one day went to Albany, and bought a handsome musket to shoot ducks with, as he said. From this date he passed much of his time in the woods along the river, and sometimes nobody knew where he was gone or what was his object.

His sole object was revenge. He hated Colonel Vancour, because he himself had forfeited his protection by his base ingratitude; he hated Sybrandt for having wounded and conquered him; and, above all, he hated Catalina for having robbed him of one of the sweetest moments of revenge, by cautioning Sybrandt against his wiles and furnishing him with a weapon to defeat them. Finally, he knew that he could consummate his revenge on all three by taking the life of Catalina. This he purposed to do the first safe opportunity, and then flee into Canada to the remnant of his tribe.

Wherever Catalina went he kept her in his eye, hovering and lounging at a distance, apparently taking no notice of her, but intent on his game. Among the rugged hills that formed the inland boundary of the rich flats was a deep, romantic glen, through which a fine stream tumbled in foaming volumes from rock to rock. It was over-shadowed by huge pines and cedars, which threw their gloomy arms and locked their fingers half-way across the abyss. Here was a perpetual twilight, throughout all times of the day and every season of the year. In the hottest days of summer there was a refreshing coolness diffused around, that came with exquisite zest to the lazy and relaxed frame. Every rock, and stump, and half-decayed branch of a moldering tree was coated with velvet moss; and all along the margin of the brook, the green fringe kissed the foamy waters as they glanced away. It was here that Sybrandt was often found, deep in the reveries of a wandering mind, that seeks some steady rational object of pursuit, and floats clumsily about without purpose, like a bark away from its anchor. Here in the daytime Captain Pipe was prowling about, in hopes the young lady might chance to pay it a visit; and at night he was on the watch about the house, like a hungry wolf thirsting for the blood of his victim.

One day Catalina went to Albany on a visit of a week to friends. It was customary in those days to make little journeys, as well as great ones, on horseback, and Catalina was fond of an exercise in which she excelled. In returning from this visit she was caught in a heavy shower, which obliged her to change her dress, and the maid had placed the wet garments on an old-fashioned high chair, just before her chamber window, for the purpose of drying.

"What, *you* here!" cried Ariel, who had just entered through the garden. "You here! Why, I'll swear I saw either you or your ghost sitting at the window as I came in."

Catalina smiled, and explained the cause of his mistake.

"By Jove!" cried Ariel, "I must get your woman to dress me up a scarecrow for my cornfield, for I never saw anything more natural."

About ten in the evening of that day, as the whole family, together with Sybrandt and Ariel—the latter, as usual, fast asleep in his chair—were sitting around the supper-table, they were startled by the report of a gun close to the rear of the house, as it seemed, followed by a loud barking of the dogs. Sybrandt and Ariel ran out of the back door to see what was the matter, and found the whole population of the kitchen in great commotion, talking all together, and telling what they knew or imagined. One declared that the gun was fired from the little copsewood, another from behind the raspberry bushes, a third from behind the garden fence, and a fourth was sure he saw a man jump over the fence immediately after the report of the gun. As usual in such cases, it was impossible to come at the truth, and as no harm seemed to have been done, most people came to the conclusion that none was intended.

On returning to her room, Catalina found the chair on which her wet garments had been placed to dry lying on the floor. It seemed to have been violently overturned; but her maid declared she had not been in the room since her mistress left it, and the whole household declared the same. The mystery, therefore, remained unexplained. The next morning, however, when the maid came to fold up the dress heretofore described, she was astonished to find it perforated with round holes in two places.

"Lord, young missee!" exclaimed she, "what have you done to your riding-habit? It's all full of holes, I declare!"

Catalina was puzzled to death. She tried to recollect where and how it was possible they could have come there, but nothing occurred to account for them. In examining the old chair to see if there was anything there that might throw light on the matter, Catalina at length observed a small hole in the damask, about the size of those in her riding-habit, into which she ran her taper finger, and, feeling something hard, with some little difficulty drew forth a leaden bullet. The maid shrieked, and the young lady turned pale at the association of circumstances that instantly presented themselves to her mind, accompanied by the recollection of the terrible conflict between Sybrandt and the Indian.

The little maid was eagerly running to exhibit the bullet to Madame Vancour and the colonel, when Catalina stopped, and directed her to remain where she was. The young lady then sat down and reflected on the course it was proper to pursue. She knew the uneasiness she would inflict on her mother by communicating circumstances which seemed to indicate she had some secret enemy who sought her life.

At length Sybrandt occurred to her as one who might most secretly investigate this affair, and afford her in the mean time protection as well as advice. Accordingly she resolved to communicate the whole affair to him the first opportunity, enjoining the little maid to silence at the same time, under penalty of her highest displeasure. Sybrandt came over soon after. Catalina invited him to walk in the garden, and there disclosed all the particulars up to the discovery of the bullet, which she exhibited. The young man shuddered, while at the same time his eye flashed fire. He then exclaimed :

" Dear Catalina, I would not needlessly alarm you, but it is plain to me that you have some secret enemy who is seeking your life. No doubt the villain, whoever he is, mistook the clothes on the back of the chair, which you say was standing directly before the window, for you. I swear never to rest till I have dragged the villain to light and punishment."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE INDIAN NEVER FORGETS.

In casting about among the rural population of the neighborhood, there was but one person on whom Sybrandt could fasten the slightest suspicion, and that was Captain Pipe. He knew the persevering spirit of revenge which animates the sons of the forest, and the patience with which they watch and wait the moment of attaining their object. He remembered the bitter resentment he had expressed at being discarded by Colonel Vancour, and recalled to mind the look of malignity he had cast on Catalina as they were carrying him to prison the day of the affray at the mansion house. One day the captain came over to the mansion-house, and announced his intention of quitting that part of the country, and spending the rest of his life among the remnant of his countrymen in Canada.

"You prevented my being burned by the Mohawks," said he to Colonel Vancour; "you saved my life, but you turned me out of doors. The Indian never forgets."

The colonel gave him a variety of little presents that would be useful among his countrymen, telling him at the same time to remember what he owed to the white men, and be their friend whenever it was in his power.

"The Indian never forgets—or forgives," replied the captain, pronouncing the latter part of the sentence to himself, and grating his teeth.

Colonel Vancour was not deceived. He said in his heart: "That fellow is the enemy of me and mine; thank God, he is going away forever."

The next day the miserable cabin which the captain had built for himself was found shut up and deserted. The Indian had been seen at daylight, with his gun and his pack, wending his course to the northward, as was supposed, on his way to Canada. His departure freed Catalina from the load of cares, fears, and anxieties which had oppressed her for months past. It was not so with Sybrandt. He could not conquer his suspicions that the captain was lurking somewhere in the woods not far off. But he thought it would be cruel to mention these suspicions to Catalina. He contented himself with perambulating about the mansion-house the better part of every night.

Honest Dennis took him to task more than once for the nightly dissipations in which it was suspected he now indulged, and Sybrandt had the painful mortification of seeing that he was daily offending his benefactor almost past forgiveness. The news of his having become such a rake soon spread abroad; for what secret was ever kept in a country neighborhood? It reached the mansion-house, with divers additions, such as that of gambling and drinking. The colonel and Madame Vancour began to behave coolly towards him; Catalina only reproached him with her looks and increasing paleness. She withdrew herself gradually from his society, and seldom came into the room when he happened to be on a visit. Observing the depression of spirits in their daughter, the colonel and Madame Vancour resolved to accept an invitation for Catalina from a near relative, to come and spend the winter with her in New York.

"The sooner the better," said the colonel. "It is now late in autumn, and I will take her to town immediately."

The proposal was made to Catalina, who offered no objections, and the preparations were soon made. The next day Catalina, unconscious of the danger that hovered around her, took a fancy to stroll to the little rocky dell we have heretofore described as a favorite resort of Sybrandt. They had been used to visit it together, and it was associated in the mind of Catalina with many hours of innocent happiness. She wished to see it once more before she left the country, led by that attractive sympathy which forever draws the heart towards scenes of past enjoyment.

The residence of Mr. Dennis Vancour was on a little rising ground, which overlooked the extensive meadows spreading along the river, and commanded from its porch a view of the mansion-house. Sybrandt saw Catalina depart, and the course she pursued. Taking an opposite direction, he hastened to the little glen, determined to hide himself and watch over her safety. He arrived at the spot before her, and, concealing himself in the hollow of an immense oak that nodded on the brink of the high precipice, waited what might follow. In a few moments Catalina made her appearance, and seated herself in a recess among the rocks and trees, just where the bubbling basin at the foot of the cascade laved at her feet against the mossy stones.

Sybrandt remained quiet for somewhat more than half an hour, when he fancied he saw a pair of eyes glaring behind the thick evergreens that skirted the rear of the high rocky precipice. He shrunk closer in his covert, and in another moment saw a head cautiously protruded beyond the bushes. It was that of Captain Pipe. He saw him look cautiously round in every direction; he saw him lay himself down and crawl on his belly, dragging his gun after him towards the edge of the precipice, that he might gain a full view of his victim below—and he followed him noiselessly, creeping like a shadow rather than a substance.

At length the Indian raised himself on his knee, cocked his musket, and carried it to his cheek. In an instant it was snatched from his grasp, and in another instant the Indian had grappled it again. It went off in the struggle, and Catalina, looking up, saw a sight that recalled all her tenderness and all her fears.

Almost on the verge of the precipice stood Sybrandt and the active, powerful Indian, struggling for life, each almost bursting his sinews to force the other off the brink. Now one, now the other, seemed to have the advantage; now the back of one, and anon of the other, was towards her; and then both seemed to be quivering on the verge of eternity.

The gun had been thrown away in the contest, and now they wrestled limb to limb, heart to heart. More than once the Indian attempted to draw his knife, but Sybrandt gave him such full employment for both his hands, that he as often failed in his purpose. But the vigor of the youth was now waning fast, for he had of late become weakened by watching and anxiety. The Indian felt the trembling of his limbs, and heard with savage delight the increased quickness of his breathing. He redoubled his exertions; he grasped him tight in his arms, lifted him off his feet, and hurried him towards the verge of the rock.

Sybrandt made a desperate effort; he placed one foot on the rock, and with a quick motion of the other tripped up the heels of the Indian. Both fell, with their heads from the precipice, and their feet actually projecting over its edge. Sybrandt was uppermost; but this was rather a disadvantage, for the Indian was enabled by violent exertions to edge himself on by degrees, until both were poised on the extreme verge, and hovered on the very brink, being determined to perish with him rather than fail in his purpose. Another moment and all had been over, when, fortunately, Sybrandt perceived a little evergreen growing out of the rock, within his reach. He seized hold of it, and it sustained his grasp. With one hand he held it fast, with the other he suddenly pushed the Indian from under him, and he slipped over the precipice, still grasping the legs of the young man, who now clung to the shrub with both hands, making efforts to shake the Indian from his hold.

But for some moments his exertions were vain, and only served to exhaust his remaining strength. Feeling himself gradually relaxing his hold, and every instant growing fainter and fainter, he gathered himself to a last effort. He extricated one of his legs from the grasp of the Indian, and dashed his foot in his face with such convulsive violence that he loosed his hold, and fell among the pointed rocks which projected out of the pool below.

Catalina heard the splashing of his body in the water, and not knowing who it was that had fallen, became insensible. Sybrandt raised himself slowly and with difficulty, and descended as fast as possible towards her. She waked by degrees to a comprehension of all that had passed. She cast a shuddering glance at the pool.

"I thought I heard a groan. Perhaps the poor creature yet lives, and may be saved."

"Let him perish!" said the youth indignantly.

"Yet I pity him."

"And wish he were alive?"

"If I were sure—if I could be made quite sure neither of us could possibly ever see him again. Go, cousin, and see if he is yet alive; but take care."

Sybrandt went and dragged the body from the pool. It was dreadfully mangled and apparently lifeless. Catalina shuddered as she cast one look at it.

"Let us go home," said she. "Sybrandt, I now see it all. You knew this wretched being had not left the country."

"I did; at least I suspected so from various circumstances."

"And you were every night on the watch, guarding me—*me*—who was accusing you of spending them in gaming and riot. Oh, what short-sighted creatures we are! But why did you not tell me you suspected the Indian was still lurking about the neighborhood?"

"What, and poison all your moments of returning ease and happiness! No; I thought I could guard you from the danger without making you wretched by knowing it."

A dreadful shriek from Catalina interrupted the conversation, and Sybrandt saw the ghastly Indian close upon him, covered with blood, with his arm raised, and grasping his knife. Before he could take a step to defend himself the blow was given. The knife entered his bosom, and he staggered backwards, but did not fall. In a moment he rallied himself, and evading a second blow, closed with the now exhausted and dying wretch, whom he dashed to the ground with furious indignation. The agony of death came upon him, but did not quench his ruling passion of revenge. With convulsive agony he repeatedly buried his knife up to the hilt in the earth, and his last breath expired in a blow.

Catalina, whose mind and body had sunk under the terrible vicissitudes of the day, during this momentary struggle sat wringing her hands. Sybrandt went to her and said:

"Fear nothing, he is dead. He will never trouble you again."

"I cannot believe it," said she, recovering a little; "I saw the knife enter your bosom, yet you do not bleed. I am sure you must be wounded. Is there no blood?"

Sybrandt opened his bosom to assure her, and then, for the first time, comprehended the cause of his escaping unhurt.

The point of the Indian's knife had left its print in the center of the ducat which Catalina had given him when he went on his trading voyage, and a piece of it remained sticking there.

"See, Catalina," said he, "you have saved my life, and we are now even."

"'Twas Heaven's own doing," she replied; then they bent their way towards the mansion-house.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LONG VOYAGE.

THE effect of the tale which Catalina had to tell at home, in explanation of her long absence, may easily be imagined. Thanks and blessings were poured out from the lips of the good parents. The old gentleman called daughter and nephew into his presence, and placing her hand in his, affectionately blessed them both as his dear children.

And now it became necessary to settle the question whether the visit to New York should be paid or not paid. All things were prepared, the vessel ready, and the lady cousin in the capital apprised of her invitation having been accepted. The colonel thought they had better send an apology, and get off as well as they could. Catalina fluttered between her love and her desire of novelty. She, however, dutifully left it to her parents to decide.

Madame Vancour was a woman, a very excellent woman, yet she was a woman. She did not exactly oppose the union of the two cousins, but still her heart was not in it. Ambition was too strong for gratitude. Like almost all the American women of that age, she had imbibed, from her earliest years, a silly admiration of everything foreign—foreign horses, foreign dogs, foreign men, and, most especially, foreign officers. The good lady almost hoped that Catalina would forget her rustic lover in the gay scenes and various sights of the metropolis, and conquer some brilliant aide-de-camp, perhaps a baronet. Accordingly it was settled the visit should take place as was originally contemplated.

Sybrandt yielded with a bad grace to what he could not prevent. Gloomy, irritating thoughts crowded on his heart the next day, as he accompanied Catalina to the vessel which was to bear her away; but his pride buried them deep in his bosom.

Catalina, accompanied by her father, embarked on board of the good sloop Watervliet, whereof was commander Captain Baltus Van Slingerland, a most experienced, deliberative, and circumspective skipper. This vessel was noted for making quick passages, seldom being more than three weeks in going from Albany to New York, unless when she chanced to run on the flats, for which she seemed to have an instinctive preference. Captain Baltus was a navigator of great sagacity and courage, having been the first man that ever undertook the dangerous voyage between the two cities without asking the prayers of the Church and making his will.

Moreover, he was so cautious in all his proceedings that he took nothing for granted, and would never be convinced that his vessel was near a shoal or a sandbank until she was high and dry aground. When properly certified by ocular demonstration, he became perfectly satisfied, and set himself to smoking his pipe till it pleased the waters to rise and float him off again.

On the evening of the sixth day the vessel was becalmed in the center of the Highlands, just opposite where West Point now rears its gray stone seminaries consecrated to science, to patriotism and glory. It was then a solitary rock, where the eagle made his abode, and from which a lonely Indian sometimes looked down on the vessels gliding past far below, and cursed them as the usurpers of his ancient domain.

The tide ran neither up nor down the river, and there was not a breath of air stirring. The pilot, a dusky negro, proposed to Captain Baltus to let go the anchor, but the captain saw "no use in being in such a hurry." So the vessel lay still as a sleeping halcyon upon the unmoving mirror of the waters. Baltus drew forth his trusty pipe, and the pilot selected a soft plank on the forecastle, on which he, in a few minutes, found that blessed repose which is the golden prize of labor. Catalina wrapped herself in her cloak, and sat on the quarter-deck alone and abstracted.

At this moment a wild shrill shriek or howl broke from the shore, echoed among the silent recesses of the mountains, and roused Catalina from her delicious reverie. In about a minute it was repeated, and a third time, after a similar interval.

"Dat is de old woman," said Captain Baltus, who was sitting on the hatchway, smoking his pipe.

"What old woman?" asked Catalina.

"Why, de old Indian woman, what keeps about de rock just ashore. Don't you see it under dat pine tree?"

"What Indian woman, and what does she do there shrieking?" said the young lady.

"What, did you never hear dat story? And don't you know it's no old woman after all, but a ghost?"

"A ghost!"

"Ay—yes—a spook. I saw it one night when I got ashore on de flats just above de rock; and you may depend I was in a great hurry den for once in my life, I can tell you. It looked like de very old duyvel, standing on de rock, and whetting a great jack-knife, as dey say."

"Who say?" asked Catalina.

"Why, my fader and grandfader, who are both dead for dat matter; but dey told me de story before dey died. We shall have sixteen rainy Sundays, one after de oder, and den it will clear up wid a great snowstorm."

"Do you know the story?" asked Colonel Vancour, whose attention had been arrested by the conversation.

"Know it! Why, I have heard it a hundred times from my fader and grandfader. He was de first man dat sailed in a sloop from Albany to New York."

"We can't have higher authority. Come, Captain—I see your pipe is just filled—tell us the story."

The worthy skipper said he was no great hand at telling a story; but he would try, and accordingly began:

"Once dere was an old woman—Duyvel! Dere she is again!" exclaimed Baltus, as a long quaver echoed from the shore.

"Well, well, never mind her; go on."

"Once dere was an old woman——"

Here another quaver, apparently from the mast-head, stopped Baltus again, and made Catalina start.

"Duyvel!" cried Baltus; "but if I don't pelieve she is coming apoard of us!"

"Never mind," said the colonel again. "Go on."

"Once dere was an old woman," he began, almost in a whisper, when he was again interrupted by the black pilot, who came aft with a light, and asked Baltus whether it would not be better to haul down the sails, as he saw some appearance of wind towards the northeast, where the clouds had now obscured the moon entirely.

"Don't be in such a hurry," quoth the skipper; "time enough when de wind comes."

"Once dere was an old woman——"

At that moment the light was suddenly extinguished, and Baltus received a blow in the face that laid him sprawling on the quarter-deck, at the same instant that a tremendous scream broke forth from some invisible being that seemed close at their ears. Baltus roared manfully, and Catalina was not a little frightened. The colonel, however, insisted he should go on, bidding him get up and tell his story.

"Once dere was an old woman——"

But the legend of honest Baltus seemed destined never to get beyond the first sentence. He was again interrupted by a strange, mysterious scratching and fluttering, accompanied by a mighty cackling and confusion in the chicken-coop, which the provident captain had stored with poultry for the benefit of the colonel and his daughter.

"Duyvel! What's dat?" cried Captain Baltus, in great consternation.

"Oh, it's only the old woman robbing your hen-roost," replied the colonel.

"Den I must look to it," said Baltus, and mustering the courage of desperation, went to see what was the matter. In a few moments he returned, bringing with him a large owl, which had, from some freak or other, or perhaps attracted by the charms of Baltus's poultry, first lighted on the mast, and then, confused by the light, darted from thence into the platter-face of the worthy skipper, as before stated.

"Here is de duyvel!" exclaimed Baltus.

"And the old woman," said the colonel, laughing. "But come, Captain, I am anxious to hear the rest of the story."

"Once dere was an old woman——" a hollow murmur among the mountains again suddenly interrupted him.

"There is the old woman again," said the colonel.

"'Tis de old duyvel!" said Baltus, starting up and calling all hands to let go the halyards.

But before this could be accomplished, one of those sudden squalls, so common in the Highlands in autumn, struck the vessel and threw her almost on her beam ends. The violence of the motion carried Colonel Vancour and Catalina with it, and had they not been arrested by the railings of the quarter-deck, they must inevitably have gone overboard.

The Watervliet was, however, an honest Dutch vessel, of a most convenient breadth of beam, and it was no easy matter to capsize her entirely. For a minute or two she lay quivering and struggling with the violence of the squall that roared among the mountains and whistled through the shrouds, until, acquiring a little headway, she slowly luffed up in the wind, righted, and flapped her sails in defiance. The next minute all was calm again. Whereupon Captain Baltus, like a prudent skipper as he was, ordered all sail to be lowered, and the anchor to be let go, sagely observing it was high time to look out for squalls.

Bright and early the next morning, Captain Baltus, having looked round in every direction—east, west, north, and south—to see if there were any squalls brewing, and perceiving not a cloud in the sky, cautiously ordered half the jib and mainsail to be hoisted, to catch the little land breeze that just rippled the surface of the river. In a few hours they emerged from the pass at the foot of the great Dunderbarrack,[1] and slowly opened upon that beautiful amphitheater into which Nature has thrown all her treasures and all her beauties. Nothing material occurred worthy the dignity of our story to record during the rest of the passage. Suffice it to say, that at the expiration of ten days from leaving Albany the good sloop Watervliet arrived safe at Coenties Slip,[2] where all the Albany sloops congregated at that time.

This extraordinary passage was much talked of in both cities, and finally found its way into the weekly "News Letter," then the only paper published in the whole New World.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. AUBINEAU HAD A PLAN.

CATALINA was received with a welcome kindness by Mrs. Aubineau, the lady with whom she had been invited to spend the winter, and who appeared struck with the improvement of her person since she left boarding-school two or three years before. Our heroine was glad to see Mrs. Aubineau again, having a vivid recollection of her pleasing manners and matronly kindness.

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[1] same as Dunderberg or Donderberg (Thunder Mountain), on the west of the Hudson, opposite to Peekskill.

[2] the name of a dock or landing place in New York City.

The husband of this lady was a son of one of the Huguenots driven by the bigotry or policy of Louis the Fourteenth[1] to this land of liberty—liberty of action, liberty of speech, and liberty of conscience. The father of Mr. Aubineau had occupied a dignified situation under the Dutch Government while it held possession of New York, but lost it when the province was assigned to the Duke of York.[2]

Mr. Aubineau the younger married a handsome English woman, a real native, born and educated in London. Her father came over with an appointment which enabled him to live in style, and carry his head high above the unlucky beings whose destiny it had been to be born on the wrong side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Among the most prominent of the foibles of Mrs. Aubineau was an idea at that time very prevalent among both English and American women. This was an undisguised and confirmed conviction that the whole universe was a nest of barbarians compared with old England, and that there was as much moral and physical difference between being born there and here as there was space between the two countries.

The connection between this lady and our heroine originated in a marriage between the elder Aubineau and a sister of Colonel Vancour. Into the hands of Mrs. Aubineau the colonel consigned his daughter for the winter, at the same time communicating her engagement with Sybrandt Westbrook, at which she laughed in her sleeve. She had already a plan in her head for establishing her rich and beautiful guest in a far more splendid sphere, as she was pleased to imagine.

At the end of eight or ten days Colonel Vancour took his departure for home in the good sloop Watervliet, which had made vast dispatch in unlading and lading, on account of the lateness of the season.

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[1] was King of France from 1643 (when he was but five years of age) to 1715.

[2] brother of King Charles II. of England. See Introduction.

Catalina was connected in different ways with almost all the really respectable and wealthy inhabitants of New York and its vicinity, such as the Philipsès, the Stuyvesants, the Van Courtlandts, the Beekmans, Bayards, Delanceys, Gouverneurs, Van Hornes, Rapalyes, Rutgers, Waltons, and a score of others too tedious to enumerate. Of course she could be in no want of visitors, and there was every prospect of a gay winter. The morning after her arrival she received the visits of several officers, two of whom—Sir[1] Thicknesse Throgmorton, and Honorable Barry Gilfillan, of an ancient and noble Irish family—had the honor of being aides-de-camp to his excellency the governor and commander-in-chief.

Sir Thicknesse Throgmorton was what is now generally designated a "real John Bull," a being combining more of the genuine elements of the ridiculous than perhaps any other extant. Stiff as buckram, and awkward as an ill-contrived automaton; silent, stupid, and ill-mannered; yet at the same time full of pretensions to a certain deference, due from others only in exchange for courtesy and good breeding. Ignorant of his own country from incapacity to learn, and of the rest of the world from a certain contemptuous stupidity, he exalted the one and contemned the other without knowing exactly why, except that—that it certainly was so, and there was an end of the matter.

Colonel Barry Fitzgerald Macartney Gilfillan was an Irish Bull,[2] a perfect contrast to an English Bull. He was all life, love, gallantry, whim, wit, humor, and hyperbole. His animal spirits were to him as the wings of a bird, on which he mounted into the regions of imagination and folly. It is scarcely necessary to add that he was generous, brave, and a man of his word, except sometimes in affairs of business, when he occasionally lost at play the money he had promised to a tradesman. His person exhibited a rich redundancy of manly beauty, luscious with youth, health, and vigor.

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[1] *Sir* is a title of honor given to knights or baronets, and always prefixed to the Christian name.

[2] meaning that, in contrast to the Englishman, he had all the characteristics of an Irishman.

This gentleman fell in love with Catalina at first sight, and never man had a better excuse; for she was in the ripe prime of womanhood, and lovely as the happiest creations of painting and poetry. Now it was that the spirit moved Sir Thicknesse Throgmorton to gather himself together and honor Catalina with his notice. He was envious of Gilfillan, who was perpetually throwing his accomplishments into the shade, and whose spirit, brilliancy, and good nature made the leaden dullness of the other appear still more ungracious.

Mrs. Aubineau soon perceived the important conquests Catalina had achieved in so short a time. She accordingly forthwith fell to balancing accounts between the two suitors, for as to honest Sybrandt she looked upon that affair as a mere country arrangement, made to be broken the first convenient opportunity. If Catalina, quoth Madame Aubineau, in her secret cogitations, marries Gilfillan she will be a countess in time; but then it's only an Irish title, and there is no estate to it, I know. If she marries Sir Thicknesse she will be a lady at once, wife to an English baronet—and lady is lady all the world over. The conclusion of Madame Aubineau was to encourage Sir Thicknesse and discourage his rival.

She did nothing but give parties at night, and her worthy husband had no rest until he gave parties by day, at which Sir Thicknesse was always seated next to Catalina at dinner. Colonel Gilfillan never omitted to gain a seat on the other side, where his humor, vivacity, and gallantry seldom failed to obscure the solemn, dignified stupidity of his rival, and throw him into utter oblivion.

All this time Catalina had no idea of any serious attentions on the part of the two gentlemen. She had not troubled her head in the business until she began to be congratulated on all hands at the conquests she had made. Nay, some of the old ladies affected to ask her very significantly "when *it*[1] was to be—whether the old folks had given their consent, and how Master Sybrandt Westbrook was, and whether he did not mean to spend part of the winter in town."

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. AUBINEAU OBJECTS.

"My dear," said Mr. Aubineau to his wife one day that he had been asked by a visitor when Catalina was to be married —"my dear, have you forgot that your friend Miss Vancour is engaged to be married to her cousin?"

"No, my dear," replied she, "I've not forgot it. I've not lost my memory yet, thank heaven."

"Well, then, my dear, do you wish to make a fool of Sir Thicknesse Throgmorton?"

"No, my dear, I don't wish to make a fool of Sir Thicknesse Throgmorton."

"Then perhaps you wish to make a fool of Catalina?"

"I don't understand you, my dear."

"Why, my dear, it seems to me that, knowing as you do the engagement of this young lady, the encouragement you give Sir Thicknesse in his attentions to her, when it is obvious they must be vain, is very well calculated to make a fool of him in the common acceptation of the term."

"Pooh! Mr. Aubineau. What is an engagement between two people who fall in love in the country because they don't know what to do with themselves?"

"Why, Mrs. Aubineau, I think an engagement made in the country as binding as if it were made in the city."

"Mr. Aubineau, you talk nonsense. To miss such an establishment, and a title to boot! What do you say to that?"

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[1] meaning her marriage.

"Why, I say that neither a title nor an establishment furnishes sufficient apology for acting dishonorably."

"Why, Mr. Aubineau, how you talk!"

"This young lady is placed under our guardianship by her parents, who have sanctioned her engagement with her cousin; and we are in some measure responsible for her conduct. What will her father say?"

"Pooh! What signifies what he says?"

"And her mother?"

"Why, she'll say we have done right to break off this foolish country engagement."

"I doubt it."

"If she don't she is a most unnatural mother. Why, Madame Van Borsum, and Madame Van Dam, and Madame Twentyman, and all the other madames that have marriageable daughters are ready to die of envy."

"Well, let them die, if they will."

"Let them die? Why, you inhuman man, are you not ashamed of yourself? The poor souls!"

"But this is nothing to the purpose. It is not what others may think or say, but what we ought to do, that I wish to consult you about."

"Well, my dear, I am willing to be consulted as much as you please; but I tell you beforehand all you can say will not alter my opinions or my conduct, my dear."

"Oh, if that is the case, madame, I shall take my own course. I shall to-day write to invite Sybrandt Westbrook to come down and spend the rest of the winter with us."

"If you do, I won't be civil to him."

"Then I shall be particularly civil."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"There's no room for him in the house."

"I shall have a bed made for him in my library."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"I tell you what, my dear——"

"You need not tell me anything, my dear. I recollect you were pleased to observe, just now, nothing I could say would alter your opinions or your conduct. I am just in the same humor. There is a government messenger going to Albany to-morrow—I shall write by him."

CHAPTER XX.

A HERO IN A SNUFF-COLORED SUIT.

In due time Sybrandt received the letter of Mr. Aubineau, and obtained a slow, unwilling assent from Mr. Dennis Vancour to accept the invitation. Colonel Vancour also gave his approbation, and madame did not oppose, though she did not like the arrangement.

The good Dennis was resolved his nephew and heir should not disgrace him at the little court of the little puissant governor of New York. He got him two full suits constructed by his own tailor. The favorite colors of Dennis were snuff and drab, and accordingly these were ordered. The tailor was enjoined to be very particular in not making them too tight, as people were very apt to grow fat as they grew old; and Ariel had a glorious time of it. He went to Albany four times a week, to superintend the construction of Sybrandt's wardrobe, and hasten the completion of this arduous business. All things being in readiness, the good Dennis gave Sybrandt his blessing, together with abundance of advice, backed by a purse of guineas.

While these things were going on in the country our heroine was in a sort of a quandary. Sometimes she was glad that her cousin was coming, and sometimes she was sorry; for mighty were her fears that the fashionable people of New York, and more especially the aides-de-camp, would laugh at his country manners and homely apparel. One day Gilfillan came in, and finding a miniature of Catalina, was seized with the gallant whim of possessing himself of it. Our heroine stated to him the indelicacy of such a procedure; he replied that he did not mean to keep it, and finally turned the whole into a joke and set our heroine laughing in spite of her vexation. He carried off the bauble with a solemn assurance of returning it the next day.

A few days afterward Sybrandt arrived. Catalina received him, I cannot tell exactly how. It was an odd compound of affected indifference and affected welcome; fear of showing too little feeling, and horror of exhibiting too much.

The next evening after his arrival Sybrandt made his *début* at a grand party given by his excellency the governor in honor of his majesty's birthday. All the dignitaries of the province were present on this occasion, for their absence would have been looked upon as a proof of disloyalty that might have cost them their places. If Sybrandt, the humble and obscure Sybrandt, was awed by the majesty of this illustrious assemblage, who can blame him? When it was whispered about that he was the country beau, the accepted one of the belle of New York, the scrutiny he underwent would have shaken the heart of a lion. The young ladies who envied Catalina the conquest of the two aides revenged themselves by tittering at her beau behind their fans.

"Did you ever see such an old-fashioned creature?" whispered Miss Van Dam to Miss Twentyman. "I declare, he looks frightened out of his wits."

"And then his snuff-colored breeches!" said the other.

Our heroine could not altogether resist the contagion of the ridicule poured out upon poor Sybrandt's snuff-colored suit. By degrees she found herself growing ashamed of her old admirer, whose attentions she received with a certain embarrassment and haughty coolness, which he saw and felt immediately; for Sybrandt was no fool, although he did wear a snuff-colored suit made by a Dutch tailor.

Neither did he lack one spark of the spirit becoming a man conscious of his innate superiority over the gilded swarm around him. The moment he saw the state of Catalina's feelings, he met her more than half-way, and intrenched himself behind his old defenses of silent neglect and proud humility. He spoke to her no more that evening. Though Catalina was conscious in her heart that she merited this neglect, still this was a very different thing from being satisfied with it. She became only the more dissatisfied at being thus neglected.

The next morning Sybrandt proceeded to the quarters of Colonel Gilfillan, with a design of explaining to him his claims on Catalina, and demanding a relinquishment of his attentions. He was told the colonel had stepped out for a few minutes, and requested to wait his return. During the interval he happened to take up a music-book which lay on the table. It opened of itself, and a miniature picture fell from it on the floor. Sybrandt took it up with the intention of replacing it, when to his dismay he discovered in it the likeness of Catalina. He stood with the picture in his hand when Gilfillan entered and was beginning in his gayest tones with:

"My dear Mr. Westbrook, you're welcome," when Sybrandt interrupted him without ceremony.

"Colonel Gilfillan, when I inform you I have a deep interest in the question, I hope you will answer it frankly—May I ask where you procured this picture?"

"Certainly, Mister—a—a—Mister Westbrook, you are at perfect liberty to ask any question of me, but allow me to observe, it depends upon myself whether I choose to answer."

"But, sir, you will permit me to say you *must* do me the favor to answer this question."

"Must! You don't say so, sir?"

"Colonel Gilfillan, this is no time for trifling. Is it known to you that an engagement subsists between the original of that picture and myself, sanctioned by her parents?"

"Mr. Westbrook, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether there does or not."

"You will not gratify my inquiry, then?"

"Not I," replied the colonel carelessly.

"Then let me tell you, sir, that I neither recognize in your preceding or your present conduct anything that entitles you to particular respect."

"Before you go any farther, my friend, let me ask you a civil question—Will you fight? For it must come to that if you say the thousandth part of such another word."

Sybrandt went to the table, and in an instant presented a paper to the colonel, on which were the following words:

"Meet me at six to-morrow morning, at Hoboken,[1] and I'll answer your question."

The colonel was somewhat startled at this prompt dealing in a man in a snuff-colored suit.

"At six to-morrow?"

"At six."

"With pistols, did you say?"

"With pistols, if you please, or——"

"Oh, it's all the same to me."

"Good-morning, then, Colonel."

"Good-morning, Mr. Westbrook," answered the colonel.

The colonel was here suddenly interrupted by a message from his excellency requiring his immediate attendance. He accordingly hurried off to the government house, while Sybrandt slowly turned towards the mansion of Mr. Aubineau.

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[1] a town in the State of New Jersey, on the west bank of the Hudson River, and opposite to New York City. Duels were usually fought early in the morning, and at some quiet and secluded spot where there would be few spectators. The invitation to meet at Hoboken was a challenge to a duel.

CHAPTER XXI.

SENT TO THE FRONT.

GILFILLAN in the meantime had an interview with the governor, who informed him that a packet had just arrived from England with despatches apprising him war had been declared between that country and France, and directing him to make immediate preparations to defend the frontier against the inroads of the French and Indians.

"It is necessary to notify the commanding officer at Ticonderoga with the least possible delay. I have selected you for that purpose. When can you be ready, Colonel?"

"To-morrow morning, at eight o'clock."

"That won't do; you must be ready to-day."

"Impossible, sir," exclaimed Gilfillan abruptly, "I have an engagement which I cannot violate."

"Colonel Gilfillan, I cannot conceive any engagement possible which can excuse a soldier from the performance of his duty to his country."

"An affair of honor,[1] sir."

"No, not even an affair of honor, Colonel. Your first duty is to your country. She has bought your services by bestowing honors on you, and you have no right to throw away a life which belongs to her."

Gilfillan reflected a moment, and coldly replied, "I will be ready in one hour."

He then returned to his lodgings, and the first thing he did was to send the following note:

"TO SYBRANDT WESTBROOK, ESQ.

"*Sir:* You will soon hear that war is declared between the cock and the lion;[2] and this is to inform you that his excellency has ordered me with dispatches to the frontier. I must depart in an hour; consequently the settlement of our little private affair must lie over for the present. But there is a time for all things, and we must wait with patience. When you can wait no longer you will find me, probably, somewhere about Lake George or Ticonderoga. You know the motto of my family is 'Ready, aye ready.' Adieu for the present.

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[1] meaning a duel.

[2] meaning France and England. The lion is the emblem of England. France was anciently called Gaul, and the inhabitants Gauls. The Latin word for a Gaul is *Gallus*, which is also Latin for cock (a male bird); hence France is referred to as the "Cock."

"B. F. M. GILFILLAN."

His next step was to stride away to the mansion of Mr. Aubineau, for the purpose of bidding farewell to Catalina, whom he surprised waiting the return of Sybrandt.

"Colonel Gilfillan," said she, haughtily, "I neither wished nor expected this visit."

"Do not be angry, madam; I come to bid you a long farewell. I set out in one hour for the frontier, and heaven only knows whether you will see poor Gilfillan again."

"Colonel Gilfillan, listen to me seriously, for I am going to speak seriously. I have been vain, silly, and unreflecting in suffering your attentions. I am sorry for it. I am engaged to Mr. Westbrook."

"Miss Vancour," said Gilfillan, with solemnity, "do you really love this snuff-colored gentleman?"

"I do. I have reason to love him; he saved my life."

"Then, madame, I am sorry for what I have done, and ask your pardon; and so, farewell."

On the departure of Gilfillan, Sybrandt forced himself into the presence of our heroine, with a magnanimous resolution of relinquishing his claims, and declaring her free to marry whom she pleased. She received him with deep humility, from whence all the pride of woman was banished. She attempted a faltering explanation.

"Sybrandt," said she—"Sybrandt—I—I have something to say to you—I——"

"It is unnecessary; I know it all," replied he, proudly interrupting her. "Farewell, Catalina; you are free."

A few hours after he was on his way to Albany. When questioned by Colonel or Madame Vancour on the subject of Catalina, he answered sometimes with embarrassment, sometimes with negligence. They suspected something disagreeable had happened, yet could not tell what.

But public events soon occurred which occupied the almost exclusive attention of Colonel Vancour and his family. Rumors of wars, of burnings and massacres on the frontier, coming nearer and nearer every day, brought the sense of danger home to the very bosoms of the people of Albany and of the flats. Rural quiet was banished from the firesides of the peaceful Dutchmen, rural occupations ceased in the fruitful fields, and gave place to gloomy anticipations of blood and massacre. Even little Ariel meditated joining the army at Ticonderoga.

"Sybrandt," he would say, "suppose you and I make a campaign, hey?"

CHAPTER XXII.

DISCIPLINE IN THE WILDERNESS.

SYBRANDT not only meditated, but had determined, on such a course. About this time his old friend and host, Sir William Johnson, paid a visit to Colonel Vancour, to arrange with him a plan for subsisting the army in the uncultivated regions of Lakes George and Champlain. Sybrandt took the opportunity to offer his services, and Sir William gladly accepted them.

"I want a volunteer aide," said he, "and you are the very man. When can you be ready? I will give you till the day after to-morrow."

Sybrandt went immediately to the good Dennis to announce his intention, and ask his consent to be a soldier.

"Thou shalt go, my boy. I am too old now to go myself, and thou shalt be my substitute. Thou shalt take the best horse from my stable, the truest servant of my household, and the warmest blessing of my heart, and go forth."

The next day Colonel Vancour wrote to his daughter to return home, under the protection of the wife of an officer he knew was on the eve of joining the army on the frontier.

By daylight Sir William and his aide joined a detachment on its march to Ticonderoga under the temporary command of the former. The corps which our hero accompanied formed part of a crack regiment, distinguished for its technical discipline, exquisite neatness, and veteran service in the wars of Europe. The soldiers were proud of their snow-white pantaloons, and the officers valued themselves on the splendors of their embroidery and epaulettes, which only furnished a mark for the savages, and cost many a gallant warrior his life.

The first thing Sir William did was to attempt initiating them into some of the modes of Indian warfare. He set the officers the example of doffing their rich military accoutrements, and substituting a common soldier's coat, with the skirts cut off. He denounced all displays of glittering finery, which answered no other purpose here than enabling the savages to descry the march of an enemy at a distance. The gunbarrels were blackened for the same purpose; and for boots and spatterdashes he substituted Indian leggins of strong coarse cloth.

Sybrandt admired and studied the character of this singular man, who combined as much mental and physical power as was ever perhaps concentrated in one individual. But our hero, notwithstanding his resolution to shake off the depression of his spirits, continued to labor under the nightmare of indolent, gloomy lassitude. One day, as they were slowly ascending the mountain which bounds the southern extremity of Lake George, Sybrandt was more abstracted than usual.

"Young man," abruptly exclaimed Sir William—"young man, are you in love yet?"

Sybrandt was startled, and the red consciousness shone in his face.

"I am answered," said Sir William. "There is a written confession in your face. But look, we are at the summit of the mountain. The water you see studded with green islands, and bounded by those mountains tipped with gold, is Lake George. At the extremity of Lake George is Ticonderoga; at Ticonderoga is glory and danger. Resolve this instant to be a man; to devote yourself to the present and the future; to forget the past, so far as it interferes with the duties a soldier owes to his country, or return home this instant. Young man, I did not bring you here to ruminate, but to act."

Sybrandt rode close up to him, and exclaimed:

"Sir William Johnson, show me an enemy, and I will show myself a man."

"Good!" cried Sir William. "Good! I see you only want action; and I will take care you shall have enough of it."

They descended the mountain, and were accommodated that night in Fort George, close on the margin of the lake—that beautiful lake which combines within itself every charm that constitutes the divinity of nature.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIMOTHY WEASEL.

After resting one night at Fort George, they proceeded, in boats which were waiting for them, down the lake, and in good time arrived at Ticonderoga. Here Sir William turned over the reënforcement he had brought with him to its proper division, and himself took command of the provincials and the Indian allies consisting of the warriors of the Five Nations.

The situation of Ticonderoga, or *Old Ti*, as it is familiarly called, enables it to command the best route between Canada and New York, and, consequently, it had always been a bone of contention between the French and English while the former possessed the Canadas and the latter the United States. At the period of which I am now speaking, here was assembled the finest army that had hitherto been collected in one body in the New World, as to numbers, discipline, and appointments.

The commander was a brave, experienced, and capable officer; but he knew little of the nature of an irregular warfare in the wilderness against savages and woodmen, and, what was far worse, was too proud to learn. He might have found in Colonel Vancour and Sir William Johnson most able and efficient instructors; but he could not brook the idea of being schooled by *provincials,* and gloomy were the forebodings of these two experienced gentlemen, during their last conference, that the obstinacy of the commanding general would be fatal to the expedition, and occasion the defeat, if not the destruction, of this fine army.

Sir William was not a man to be idle in such stirring times, and he determined that Sybrandt should have little leisure for devouring his own heart in idleness and disappointment. He accordingly detached him on various services; sometimes to gain information of the motions of the enemy, who were said to be advancing in force, and at others to scour the woods in search of vagrant parties of hostile Indians. In all these services Sybrandt acquitted himself with courage and discretion.

"Bravo!" would Sir William exclaim; "you were made for a soldier—to command, not to obey. I see I shall make something of you. To-night I shall put you to the knife, and try your metal to the utmost."

"I am ready," answered Sybrandt.

"Listen, then," replied Sir William. "Our general is a good soldier and an able officer, so far as mere bravery and an acquaintance with European tactics go. But he is not fit to command here. He is ignorant of his enemy, and undervalues him. He has not the least conception that an army of savages may be within twenty feet of him, and he neither see nor hear them.

"From various indications, which none but an Indian or a backwoodsman can comprehend, I am fully satisfied that the enemy is in much greater force than he chooses to have believed; and this is what I want to be certain of before to-morrow morning, because I have been apprised by the general that he considers it disgraceful to his majesty's arms to be cooped up in a fort by an inferior enemy. He means to march out in battle array to-morrow, with drums beating, colors flying, and every other device to apprise the enemy of his motions. If he does, it requires not the spirit of prophecy to predict that he will sacrifice, not only the interests of his country, but the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of brave men. The service is perilous; it is almost certain death."

"Name the service, Sir William. What escort am I to have?"

"None; an escort would inevitably betray you. A boat and a single man to row it is all I can allow you."

"As you please; I am satisfied."

Sir William then proceeded to instruct him in the course he was to pursue. To go on this expedition by land would subject him to inevitable discovery. He was therefore to be furnished with an Indian canoe, with a single man to paddle it, and under cover of the night, which promised to be sufficiently dark, proceed silently down the narrow strait into Lake Champlain, only so far as that he could return with certainty before daylight.

"Should you discover the position of the enemy," continued he, "you must depend upon your own sagacity, and that of Timothy Weasel, for the direction of your subsequent conduct."

"Timothy Weasel! Who is he?"

"What! have you never heard of Timothy Weasel?"

"Never."

"Well, then, I must give you a sketch of his story before I introduce him. He was born in New Hampshire, as he says, and in due time, as is customary in those parts, married, and took possession, by right of discovery I suppose, of a tract of land in what was at that time called the New Hampshire grants. Others followed him, and in the course of a few years a little settlement was formed of real 'cute Yankees, as Timothy calls them, to the aggregate of sixty or seventy men, women, and children.

"They were gradually growing in wealth and numbers, when one night, in the dead of winter, they were set upon by a party of Indians from Canada, and every soul of them, except Timothy, either consumed in the flames or massacred in the attempt to escape. I have witnessed in the course of my life many scenes of horror, but nothing like that which he describes, in which his wife and eight children perished.

"Timothy was left for dead by the savages, who, as is their custom, departed at the dawn, for fear the news of this massacre might rouse some of the neighboring settlements in time to overtake them before they reached home. When all was silent, Timothy, who, though severely wounded in a dozen places, had, as he says, only been 'playing 'possum,' raised himself up and looked around him. The smoking ruins, mangled limbs, blood-stained snow, and the whole scene, as he describes it with quaint pathos, is enough to make one's blood run cold. He managed to raise himself upright, and by dint of incredible exertions, to reach a neighboring settlement, distant about forty miles, where he told his story, and then was put to bed, where he lay some weeks.

"In the meantime the people of the settlement had gone and buried the remains of his unfortunate family and neighbors. When Timothy got well, he visited the spot, and while viewing the ruins of the houses, and pondering over the graves of all that were dear to him, solemnly devoted the remainder of his life to revenge. He accordingly buried himself in the woods, and built a cabin about twelve miles from hence, in a situation the most favorable to killing the 'kritters,' as he calls the savages. From that time until now he has waged a perpetual war against them. His intrepidity is wonderful, and his sagacity in the pursuit of this grand object of his life beyond all belief. If ever man had motive for revenge, it is Timothy. Such as he is, I employ him, and find his services highly useful. I have sent for him, and expect him here every moment."

As Sir William concluded, Sybrandt heard a long, dry sort of "H-e-e-m-m," ejaculated just outside of the door.

"That's he," exclaimed Sir William. "I know the sound. Come in, Timothy."

Timothy accordingly made his appearance, forgot his bow, and said nothing. Sybrandt eyed his associate with close attention. He was a tall, wind-dried man, with extremely sharp, angular features, and a complexion deeply bronzed by the exposures to which he had been subjected for so many years. His eye, of sprightly blue, never rested a moment in its socket. It glanced from side to side, with indescribable rapidity, as though in search of some object of interest, or apprehensive of sudden danger.

"Timothy," said Sir William, "I want to employ you to-night."

"H-e-m-m," answered Timothy.

"Are you prepared to depart immediately?"

"I guess I am."

"Have you your gun with you?"

"The kritter is just outside the door."

"And plenty of ammunition?"

"What should I do with a gun and no ammunition?"

"Can you paddle a canoe so that nobody can hear you?"

"Can't I? H-e-e-m-m!"

"Have you anything to eat by the way?"

"No; if I stay out only two or three days I shan't want anything."

"But you are to have a companion."

"I'd rather go alone."

"But it is necessary you should have a companion. This young gentleman will go with you."

"I'd rather go by myself," said he again.

"That is out of the question, so say no more about it. Are you ready to go now—this minute?"

"Yes."

Sir William then explained the object of the expedition to Timothy as he had previously to Sybrandt.

"But mayn't I shoot one of these tarnil kritters if he comes in my way?" said Timothy, in a tone of great interest.

"No; you are not to fire a gun, nor attempt any hostility whatever, unless it is neck or nothing with you."

The knight now produced two Indian dresses, which he directed them to put on. Then with his own hand he painted the face of Sybrandt so as to resemble that of an Indian, an operation not at all necessary in the case of Timothy. *His* toilet was already made; *his* complexion required no embellishment.

This done, the night having now set in, Sir William, motioning silence, led the way cautiously to one of the gates of Ticonderoga, which was opened by the sentinel, and they proceeded swiftly and silently to the high bank which hung over the narrow strait in front of the fort. A little bark canoe lay moored at the foot, in which Sybrandt and Timothy placed themselves flat on the bottom, each with his musket and accoutrements at his side, and a paddle in his hand.

"Now," said Sir William, "luck be with you, boys; remember, you are to return before daylight without fail."

Each seized his paddle, and the light feather of a boat darted away with the swiftness of a bubble in a whirlpool.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A NIGHT ADVENTURE.

"IT'S plaguey hard," muttered Timothy to himself.

"What?" quoth Sybrandt.

"Why, not to have the privilege of shooting one of these varmints."

"Does he think I don't know what's what?" again muttered Timothy, plying his paddle with a celerity and silence that Sybrandt vainly tried to equal.

The night gradually grew dark as pitch. All became of one color, and the earth and the air were confounded together in utter obscurity—at least to the eyes of Sybrandt Westbrook. Not a breath of wind disturbed the foliage of the trees, as they darted along unseen and unseeing for more than an hour.

Turning a sharp angle, at the expiration of the time just specified, Timothy suddenly stopped his paddle, and cowered down at the bottom of the canoe. Sybrandt had no occasion to inquire the reason of this action; for happening to look towards the shore, he could discover at a distance innumerable lights glimmering and flashing amid the obscurity, and rendering the darkness beyond the sphere of their influence still more profound. These lights appeared to extend several miles along what he supposed to be the strait or lake, which reflected their glancing rays upon its quiet bosom.

"There they are, the kritters," whispered Timothy, exultingly; "we've treed 'em at last. Now, mister, let me ask you one question, Will you obey my orders?"

"If I like them," said Sybrandt.

"Like or no like. I must be captain for a time, at least."

"I have no objection to benefit by your experience."

"Can you play Ingen when you are put to it?"

"I have been among them, and know something of their character and manners."

"Can you talk Ingen?"

"No."

"Ah, your education has been sadly neglected. But come, there's no time to waste in talking Ingen or English. We must get right in the middle of these kritters. Can you creep on all fours without waking up a cricket?"

"No."

"Plague on it! I wonder what Sir William meant by sending you with me. I could have done better by myself. Are you afeared?"

"Try me."

"Well, then, I must make the best of the matter. The kritters are camped out—I see by their fires—by themselves. I can't stop to tell you everything; but you must keep close to me, do jist as I do, and say nothing; that's all."

Sybrandt obeyed his injunctions, and Timothy proceeded towards the lights, which appeared much farther off in the darkness than they really were, handling his paddle with such lightness and dexterity that Sybrandt could not hear the strokes. In this manner they swiftly approached the encampment, until they could distinguish a confused noise of shoutings and hallooings, which gradually broke on their ears in discordant violence. Timothy stopped his paddle and listened.

"It is the song of the Outawas.[1] They're in a drunken frolic, as they always are the night before going to battle."

Cautiously plying his paddle, he now shot in close to the shore whence the sounds of revelry proceeded, and made the land at some little distance. They then drew up the light canoe into the bushes, which here closely skirted the waters.

"Now leave all behind but yourself, and follow me," whispered Timothy, as he carefully felt whether the muskets were well covered from the damps of the night, and then laid himself down on his face and crawled along under the bushes with the quiet celerity of a snake in the grass.

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[1] meaning the Ottawa Indians.

"Must we leave our guns behind?" whispered Sybrandt.

"Yes, according to orders; but it's a plaguey hard case."

After proceeding some distance, Sybrandt getting well scratched by the briars, and finding infinite difficulty in keeping up with Timothy, the latter stopped short.

"Here the kritters are," said he, in the lowest whisper.

"Where?" replied the other in the same tone.

"Look right before you."

Sybrandt followed the direction, and beheld a group of five or six Indians seated round a fire, the waning luster of which cast a fitful light upon their dark countenances, whose savage expression was heightened to ferocity by the stimulant of the drunken feast in which they were engaged. They sat on the ground, swaying to and fro, backward and forward, and from side to side, ever and anon passing round the canteen from one to the other, and sometimes rudely snatching it away when they thought either was drinking more than his share. At intervals they broke out into yelling, and discordant songs filled with extravagant boastings of murders, massacres, burnings, and plunderings, mixed up with threatenings of what they would do to the red-coats on the morrow.

"Stay here a moment," whispered Timothy, as he crept cautiously towards the noisy group, which all at once became perfectly quiet, and remained in the attitude of listening.

"Huh!" muttered one, who appeared by his dress to be the principal.

Timothy replied in a few Indian words, which Sybrandt did not comprehend; and raising himself from the ground, suddenly appeared in the midst of them. A few words were rapidly interchanged, and Timothy then brought forward his companion, whom he presented to the Outawa, who welcomed him and handed the canteen, now almost empty.

"My brother does not talk," said Timothy.

"Is he dumb?" asked the chief of the Outawas.

"No; but he has sworn not to open his mouth till he has struck the body of a long knife."[1]

"Good," said the other; "he is welcome."

After a pause he went on, at the same time eyeing Sybrandt with suspicion; though his faculties were obscured by the fumes of the liquor he still continued to drink.

"I don't remember the young warrior. Is he of our tribe?"

"He is; but he was stolen by the Mohawks many years ago, and only returned lately."

"How did he escape?"

"He killed two chiefs and ran away."

"Good," said the Outawa; and grasping his tomahawk, he started up, rushed towards Sybrandt, and raising his deadly weapon, stood over him in the attitude of striking. Sybrandt remained perfectly unmoved, waiting the stroke.

"Good," said the Outawa again. "He shall go with us to battle to-morrow."

"We have just come in time," said Timothy. "Does the white chief[2] march against the red coats to-morrow?"

"He does."

"Has he men enough to fight them?"

"They are like the leaves on the trees," said the other.

By degrees Timothy drew from the Outawa chief the number of Frenchmen and Indians which composed the army, the time when they were to commence their march, the course they were to take, and the outlines of the plan of attack.

By the time he had finished his examination, the whole party, with the exception of Timothy, Sybrandt, and the chief, were fast asleep. In a few minutes after, the two former affected to be in the same state, and began to snore lustily. The chief nodded from side to side, then sank down like a log, and remained insensible to everything around him, in the sleep of drunkenness.

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[1] meaning an Englishman or an American, the "long knife" being the sword. The Indians did not use swords, but tomahawks and short knives, as also bows and arrows, and firearms after they learned the use of them from the whites. The tomahawk was the Indian war hatchet.

[2] the French general.

Timothy lay without motion for a while, then turned himself over, and rolled about from side to side, managing to strike against each of the party in succession. They remained fast asleep. He then cautiously raised himself, and Sybrandt did the same.

After ascertaining by certain tests, which experience had taught him, that the Indians still continued in a profound sleep, Timothy proceeded to shake the priming from each of the guns in succession. After this he took their powder-horns and emptied them; then he motioned Sybrandt, and both crawled away with the silence and celerity with which they came, launched their light canoe, and plied their paddles with might and main.

"The morning breeze is springing up," said Timothy, "and it will soon be daylight. We must be tarnil busy."

And busy they were, and swiftly did the light canoe slide over the wave, leaving scarce a wake behind her. A few hours of sturdy exertion brought them within sight of Ticonderoga, and as they struck the foot of the high bluff whence they had departed, the rays of the sun just tipped the peaks of the high mountains rising towards the west.

Without losing a moment, they proceeded to the quarters of Sir William Johnson, whom they found waiting for them with extreme anxiety. He extended both hands towards them, and eagerly exclaimed:

"What luck? Have you been at the enemy's camp?"

"Right in their very bowels," said Timothy.

Sir William proceeded to question, and Sybrandt and Timothy to answer, until he drew from them all the important information of which they had possessed themselves. He then dismissed Timothy with cordial thanks and a purse of yellow boys, which he received with much satisfaction.

"As to you, Sybrandt Westbrook, you have fulfilled the expectations I formed of you on our first acquaintance. You claim a higher reward, for you have acted from higher motives and with at least equal courage and resolution. His majesty shall know of this; and in the meantime call yourself Major Westbrook, for such you are from this moment. Now go with me to the commander-in-chief, who must know of what you heard and saw."

CHAPTER XXV.

A BUSH FIGHT.

SYBRANDT accompanied Sir William to the presence of the commander-in-chief. They found him surrounded by a number of officers, among whom our hero was startled to see Colonel Gilfillan. They recognized each other by a stately bow and a flush of the cheek.

When his excellency had heard the report of Sybrandt, and commended his intrepidity, he announced his intention to sally forth and surprise the enemy, instead of remaining cooped up in their defenses like cowards.

"Caution is not cowardice," observed Sir William. "It is certain that the enemy exceeds us in numbers. As to surprising them, it is sufficient to say they have two thousand Indians with them. Might I advise, sir, I would respectfully suggest that we remain here and receive the enemy in our intrenchments, where we can keep them at bay until their Indian allies desert them, as they certainly will after being beaten back a few times."

His excellency the commanding general did not relish this wise counsel. He disdained to be governed by the advice of a *provincial officer*, and he had been brought up in the solemn conviction that one Englishman was a match for two Frenchmen by land or by water. The young officers of the line, in scarlet coats and gorgeous epaulettes, were of the same opinion. It was therefore determined that the army should march out against the enemy, and orders were immediately given for that purpose. As the officers separated to their respective destinations Sybrandt sought a meeting with Gilfillan.

"Colonel Gilfillan," said he, "permit me to remind you of a certain affair in New York which still remains unsettled."

"Major Westbrook," said the other, "to-day for our country, to-morrow for Catalina."

"You remind me of a higher duty; to-morrow be it," and he touched his hat, and bowed with a soldier-like courtesy.

The march next morning was fatiguing, owing to the obstructions everywhere opposed to them by the rough inequalities of a country as yet almost in a state of nature. Add to this, they were encumbered with an inconvenient and unnecessary quantity of baggage, which rendered their progress more slow and laborious.

It was about the middle of a long sultry summer afternoon that the army became embarrassed in passing through a tract of wet ground, covered with a forest of those majestic trees which give such sublimity to our primeval woods. The road, which was little more than a space about thirty yards wide cleared of wood, became deeper and more embarrassing as they advanced, and soldiers and horses began to pant and falter, and stick fast in the mud. At the moment when the whole army was thus entangled and struggling under fatigue, heat, and hunger, a horrible shout, followed by a discharge of guns in front and rear and all around them, rung in their ears, and struck a chill into the stoutest heart. Whiteskins and redskins seemed to spring out of the ground; every trunk of a tree sent forth death and destruction into the beleaguered host, and invisible hands pointed invisible guns, and launched invisible arrows. The moment the yell echoed through the forest Sir William exclaimed to Sybrandt, who was marching at his side, weary and disheartened:

"There they are! I thought as much."

"Your commands, Sir William," answered the other.

"Commands! Nobody commands now but the great Leader of the hosts of heaven. The law of nature is come again, and all are equal here. Every man for himself, and God for us all!" shouted he, in a voice that echoed through the forest, as he drew a pistol and dashed, as fast as the woods and marshes would permit, in the direction of the horrible yellings that still continued. Sybrandt followed. But there was no enemy to be seen, though every instant the officers, in their red coats, fell dead by invisible hands.

By degrees, though quicker than I can relate it, parties of the Five Nations rallied round their old leader, and Sir William soon saw himself at the head of a considerable number. With these he commenced his operations in the regular style of bush-fighting, to which all other modes of warfare are mere children's play. Each man then depends on his own skill, cunning, and daring; each man concentrates his soul and body in efforts for self-preservation alone, and the impulse of glory is changed to the instinct of love of life.

The fight soon became equal between the hostile Indians and Sir William and his valiant Mohawks, who still continued the objects of terror to all the savages from the Atlantic to the shores of Lake Superior. Nor was Sybrandt idle. He, as well as all the rest, now fought on foot, either from choice or necessity; and, as the obstructions of the ground prevented acting in concert, he was frequently engaged in personal contests with the hostile party.

It happened that Sybrandt, who had now received two or three flesh wounds, which had somewhat weakened him in the devious vicissitudes of the fight, encountered an Indian, who seemed the principal or one of the principal leaders of the hostile band. He had a tomahawk in his hand, which seemed to be his only weapon. The sole defense of Sybrandt was a loaded pistol. With cautious malice the Indian and the white man eyed each other; the former keenly scrutinizing the latter to ascertain his means of defense, and Sybrandt displaying equal curiosity.

The chief was at length satisfied that Sybrandt was unarmed, he having, at first sight of the savage, concealed his pistol for the purpose of disarming his caution. He accordingly approached our hero with uplifted tomahawk until Sybrandt thought him sufficiently near, when he discharged one barrel, but not with a true aim. The ball just grazed the enemy's shoulder. The chief then rushed upon Sybrandt, but was received by a dead shot of the other barrel. It entered his heart, and he fell dead.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Sir William, who just at that moment made his appearance, covered with blood and dirt. "Bravo, Major, you have done good service. That is the very head and soul of the hostile Indians. The moment they miss him they will disperse. The feat shall make you a colonel if we survive this day."

And it happened as he had predicted. By degrees the Indians remitted their attacks, and as the news of the death of their great chief was whispered among them, they discontinued their hostilities and gradually disappeared.

"The battle is over in this quarter," said the knight, and called his Mohawks to follow him in the direction where the firing still continued.

Here they found a scene of complicated confusion and carnage, principally, however, all on one side. The British army had been taken at such disadvantage, and knew so little of this mode of warfare, that their efforts were entirely inefficient. The provincials alone made some effectual resistance, and when reënforced by Sir William and his Mohawks, were at length able to repulse the enemy, who retired in perfect order, and with scarcely any loss.

In passing thus from one extremity of the fight to the other, Sybrandt became separated from his companions in the obscurity of the wood. While seeking the direction for joining them again, he heard something like a faint halloo at a little distance. After a moment's reflection he made his way towards the sound with the caution becoming his situation, until at length, peering about beneath the branches, he discovered an officer lying at the foot of a tree, with his body partly raised and resting against it. At a little distance was an Indian, grasping a knife, cautiously advancing, with an evident intention to practice upon him the bloody rites of savage barbarity.

The face of the officer was turned towards Sybrandt, and, pale as it was, he at once recognized Gilfillan. In a moment the history of the past rushed upon his mind, and in a moment he lived over his former anger, regrets, and disappointments. All these were merged the next moment in one generous feeling. He determined to rescue his rival at every risk. Levelling his pistol with a steady aim, he waited the approach of the savage, who was so intent upon his bloody purpose that he did not perceive him. When about half a dozen paces from Gilfillan, Sybrandt fired, and the Indian dropped. In another moment he was at the side of Gilfillan, who held out his hand to him, and said faintly:

"Major Westbrook, I thank you, not for my life, for that is gone past all recovery, I think; but you have saved my skin from being ripped from my head, and I am grateful. I have something to say to you, and the sooner I can say it the better."

At this moment Sybrandt perceived a second Indian approaching with his tomahawk. He attempted to rise and meet him, but he had been bleeding imperceptibly for several hours, and his strength was now quite gone. He sank down again, insensible, at the instant that he heard the report of a gun, and the exclamation: "Take that, you tarnil kritter."

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN EXPLANATION.

THIS was a bloody day for England and her colonies, and its consequences fatal to the success of their combined arms during the remainder of the war. The shattered remnant of the army found its way back to Ticonderoga, two thousand less than it went out. But fortunately the French did not pursue, owing to the defection of their Indian allies; they being as usual discouraged by their losses, which had been great, owing to the bravery and conduct of Sir William Johnson and his Mohawks.

For some hours there was a blank in the life of our hero; and that the blank did not last forever was owing to his trusty companion of the night but one before, Timothy Weasel. After rescuing Sybrandt and Gilfillan from the savage in the manner just related, he came up to the young men, the former of whom he found insensible. He examined his wounds, of which his long experience in the trade of vengeance had made him no indifferent judge.

"Is he dead?" asked Gilfillan faintly.

"Only in a swound,"[1] replied Timothy; "the blood is almost out of his body, and that's mostly what's the matter with him. Stay here till I come back, and, mind, don't neither of you stir a peg from the place."

"There's no danger of that," answered Gilfillan, with a melancholy smile, glancing his languid eye from his broken leg to the inanimate body of Sybrandt.

Timothy strode away in haste, leaving the two young men to await his return. He stayed till the shadows of evening began to fall, and Gilfillan, worn out with pain, anxiety, and weakness, had sunk down by the side of our hero. In this situation they were found by Sir William, who had been apprised by Timothy of their melancholy state. He lost not a moment, but came, conducted by Timothy, with a body of his Mohawks to their relief.

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[1] swoon.

In a few minutes they made a litter of boughs, on which they placed the two wounded soldiers, and forthwith bent their way as fast as possible for Ticonderoga. The motion of the litter put into circulation the little blood that yet lingered in Sybrandt's veins, and brought him by degrees to a consciousness of his situation. Gilfillan also came to himself betimes. It was morning before the party arrived at the intrenched camp.

The wounds of Sybrandt were found in no way dangerous of themselves; but it was feared that loss of blood and exposure to the night air might be followed by consequences that would endanger his life. The situation of Gilfillan was still more critical. A ball had struck his knee, and shattered it in a terrible manner. The surgeons at once pronounced the necessity of amputation the next day, when his strength was a little restored.

A groan, such as his previous sufferings had never forced from him, marked the feeling with which the handsome Gilfillan received this annunciation; but he uttered not a word. They were in the same room together, at the request of Gilfillan, who lay awake that night, restless and feverish. About daylight in the morning he asked Sybrandt if he was awake, and finding that he was, spoke to him as follows :

"Westbrook, I have something to say to you; and perhaps I'd better say it now, for I think it's all over with me."

He then disclosed to him the true history of the picture, and his rejection by Catalina.

"She loves you," said he faintly, "and none other. She told me so with her own lips, and the tears in her eyes."

"Is this true, Colonel Gilfillan?"

"True, on the word of a dying man."

When the surgeons visited the young men in the morning, they found Sybrandt somewhat better; but they shook their heads when they examined the wound of Gilfillan, declaring that nothing but amputation could save him.

"Then I am a dead man," said he; "for my leg shall go with me to the grave. We have kept company all our lives, and I won't part with my old friend now."

"Then you are a dead man," replied the surgeon, bluntly.

"Be it so," was Gilfillan's reply.

All that day, and until the next morning, Gilfillan was at times delirious with pain and fever; but towards the evening the soul of the gallant colonel was on its way to that country which all visit in turn.

Sybrandt's wounds were of little consequence; but the loss of blood, the exposure to the night-air, and the agitation of his mind occasioned by the explanation with Gilfillan, brought on a slow fever which threatened fatal consequences. Such was his weakness that, though his friend Sir William paid the kindest attention to him, he scarcely survived his removal by water to Fort George, and was brought there in a state that rendered recovery almost hopeless.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LETTERS WITHOUT ANSWERS.

IN the meantime Catalina had returned to the house of her father; but not the Catalina who had left it the autumn before. After the departure of Sybrandt her vivacity departed, her color faded, and the rich fulness of her form gave place to paleness, lassitude, and indifference. She was received by her parents with tender welcome, and she received that welcome with tears flowing from a hundred recollections of the past. The first caresses being over, they had leisure to observe her altered appearance, which they did with a silent interchange of anxious looks. They, however, said nothing; they suspected its cause, and this was not the time or the occasion to allude to the subject.

Sybrandt lay a long time lingering between life and death; but at length the vigor of youth got the better of the low fever which had succeeded his wounds and exposures, and he began gradually to recover. As soon as his strength would permit, he wrote to Catalina, informing her of his explanation with Gilfillan, apologizing for his unfounded jealousy, and throwing himself on her generosity for pardon.

It happened at this time there was no opportunity to send the letter by a public express, nor had Sybrandt patience to wait for one. In casting about for a messenger, he recollected a half Indian, a sort of lounger and hanger-on about the fort, who performed all sorts of menial offices for rum, and was, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, a vagabond. Still he had the reputation of courage, sagacity, and fidelity in the performance of his engagements; and our hero determined to employ him as messenger.

He intrusted him with his letter, together with two others, one for the good Dennis, the other for Colonel Vancour. He was also imprudent enough to furnish the fellow with money to bear his expenses, instead of giving him a knapsack and provisions; and thus he dispatched him, with many injunctions to proceed without delay, deliver his letters, wait an answer, and then return as soon as possible.

This trusty blade, instead of following these directions, took the first opportunity of his arrival at Albany to get exceedingly *corned*, as the phrase now is, and so continued until all his money was spent. As a matter of necessity, he then became sober; but his letters were gone—he had lost or destroyed them, or they had been taken from him; he could not tell how or when.

The trusty messenger then deliberated what was proper and safe to be done. To go to the Flats without his credentials was out of the question; and to return to Fort George for a new set of instructions would be a vast accession of trouble without any accession of pay. The result of his cogitations was a resolution to put the best face on the matter, make up a good story, and return forthwith to his employer. He accordingly entered the presence of Sybrandt with an intrepidity of face and manner that would have done honor to the most practiced diplomatist.

"Have you brought any letters?" asked our hero, eagerly, as he raised himself from the bed, where he still spent some hours of every day.

"No, sir, I no bring any ting."

"Did you see the young lady?" said our hero faintly.

"Yes, sir; I see her, and give her the letter."

"And did she read it?"

"Oh, yes, she read it, and say very nice letter—and then she laugh."

"Laugh!" thought poor Sybrandt, and his heart sank within him; "but she gave you something in return?"

"Yes, sir, she gib me a guinea, and tell me go back agin as fast as I came—de letter no want answer."

"Did she look pale? Was she thin?"

"Oh, no, sir, no! Her cheeks red as berries, and she laugh very much when I tell her you sick a-bed."

Sybrandt groaned, and it was some minutes before he could rally his spirits to ask any more questions.

"Did you see the colonel and Madame Vancour?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Colonel very good—give me a dram, and say he 'spose Major Sybran dead by dis time."

Sybrandt (as soon as he could muster strength and heart to do it) proceeded to question the mischievous mongrel closely and strictly as to the truth of his tale, which seemed to be at war with all he knew of Catalina and his uncle. But the fellow was armed at all points, and answered with such consummmate cunning that at length our hero was compelled to believe that Catalina had made such a representation of his conduct to her family on her return as had forever alienated him from their confidence and affection.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BAD NEWS.

Not many days afterwards, a young officer stopped at the mansion of Colonel Vancour on his way from Fort George to New York. It was in the dusk of the evening, and he was of course invited to stay all night. The conversation naturally turned on the events of the war, the prospect of peace, and the situation of matters on the frontier. Catalina was sitting at an open window, listening in breathless silence, to hear perhaps the name of him who occupied so large a portion of her thoughts.

"Has anything particular occurred at Fort George?" asked the colonel.

"Nothing, I believe," replied the officer; "at least, I heard nothing. I, however, only stopped there a few minutes, on my way from the foot of the lake."

"Did you happen to hear anything of Colonel Westbrook?" asked the other in a low tone; but his daughter overheard him, and her heart beat quicker in her bosom.

"Westbrook! Why, now I think of it, I did hear something of that gallant officer. He died the day——"

"Hush, for heaven's sake!" whispered the colonel. But the caution came too late. The words of the officer had met the ear of Catalina, and thence passed like daggers to her heart. Her mother was watching, and came and sat beside her daughter, who leaned on her bosom and said not one word. In the course of a quarter of an hour they left the room together. After her departure the colonel proceeded with his inquiries.

"You were saying, sir, that you understood Colonel Westbrook was dead. When I inform you that he is a near relation, and an object of great interest to my family, I hope you will excuse me for requesting you to be particular in relating the circumstances of his death."

"I am sorry," replied the young officer, "that I cannot comply with your wishes. I stopped but a few minutes at the Fort to receive dispatches, and while sitting with the general, the servant of Colonel Westbrook came running in to say his master had just expired. The general expressed great regret, and I, having received the dispatches, came away without hearing anything further."

"I will see if I can gather any further information on the subject," said the colonel.

He ordered his horse, and rode to Albany, for the purpose of making inquiries. The commanding officer at Albany had received letters by the hands of the young gentleman who had brought the news of Sybrandt's death, at the foot of one of which was this short postscript:

"Colonel Westbrook is just dead!"

The old gentleman returned with a heavy heart, and communicated this intelligence to his wife. Catalina heard the confirmation of the death of poor Sybrandt; and the loss of her lover was embittered by the consciousness that she was a principal accomplice. Nor was she the only sufferer. The good Dennis—the early friend, the father of our hero in all acts of fatherly affection—who had smoked his pipe almost threescore years in quiet in the same old arm-chair, heard the news without any outward symptoms of sorrow or despair. He possessed no great store of sensibility, but a slight shock will shake down an old building. He knocked the ashes out of his pipe deliberately against his thumb-nail, and that evening, when it was brought to him, he put it aside without uttering a word.

"Massa in a terrible bad way," said his old dusky valet, who had been his playmate in youth, his faithful, humble friend through life. "Massa in a terrible bad way when he no smoke he pipe."

On the fourth day after receiving the news of Sybrandt's death, he was found sitting in his arm-chair, dead. He had died without pain, for his face had all the placid quiet of a sweet sleep, and he sat upright as when alive.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A GHOST.

HOWEVER people may grieve for the decease of a relative, they seldom neglect opening his will the first decent opportunity. Such is the curiosity of mankind. This ceremony accordingly took place the day after the funeral of Mr. Dennis Vancour. That worthy gentleman, it would seem, on hearing of the death of his nephew, had altered the disposition of his property, and substituted Catalina his sole heiress, in the room of Sybrandt Westbrook. The change occasioned no surprise to the elders of the family, and certainly no pleasure to the young lady. She would have restored it to her cousin with her whole heart had he not been beyond the reach of her generosity.

Catalina gradually recovered a degree of composure becoming the dignity and strength of her character, and returned to her usual occupations and amusements. But the worm was in the bud, and the blush on her cheek was neither that of health nor hilarity. Time passed on slowly, without bringing with it either present pleasure or inspiring anticipations.

It was now the brown and gloomy month of November, when neither verdure is seen in the forest nor music heard in the fields, except that of the howling winds. A man on horseback, followed by a servant with a portmanteau, was seen to ride up to the door of the habitation once tenanted by Dennis Vancour, but now intrusted to the care of his servants, consisting of a venerable old negro and his wife, equally aged, with some half a dozen of their ebony grandchildren. It was the dusk of the evening, and they were all gathered round a rousing fire in the kitchen.

The horseman dismounted, so did his servant, and both proceeded to enter the premises with as little ceremony as if they were at home. Not one of the trusty guardians of the house heard or saw these intruders, for as soon as the ebony race get thoroughly warmed through, the next thing is to fall fast asleep, as a matter of course.

The stranger knocked with the butt-end of his whip; no one came. He then proceeded round the end of the house to the kitchen in the rear, and looked through the windows, where he saw the sleeping beauties.

The sight seemed to animate him, for he went and briskly lifted the latch and entered the region sacred to the stomach. No one stirred, and no sound was heard save a sonorous concord of harmony, in which each of the company bore a part. The stranger advanced, and shook the shoulder of the patriarch of the tuneful tribe.

He might as well have shaken the body of the good man of the house, who died some two months before. He sat immovable. The stranger then hallooed in his ear, but that was asleep too. "Blockhead!" quoth the stranger, muttering to himself, and seizing a bowl of water, he very unceremoniously dashed it into the face of the exemplary sleeper.

"Bo-o-o-o!" exclaimed old ebony, as he started up, amazed and indignant at this inundation. He wiped his eyes, probably for the purpose of seeing the clearer, and took a look at the stranger, which look was followed by immediate prostration, and a yell that awakened the rest of the sleepers.

The moment they laid their eyes upon the stranger, the cry of "A spook! a spook!" was repeated with extraordinary energy, and followed by the dispersion of the whole tribe different ways, with the exception of the patriarch, who still lay on his face, kicking and roaring manfully.

Return we now to the mansion house of Colonel Vancour, in the well-warmed parlor of which was collected the usual family party. The colonel was reading; madame was knitting a pair of stockings for a poor woman; Ariel was, as usual at this hour of the evening, fast asleep, and musical as ever. Catalina was at the window, whence by the waning light she could see and sympathize with the desolation of nature. At this moment one of the dark ministering spirits of the neighboring mansion rushed into the room unannounced, and saluted the good company with the cry of:

"A spook! A spook! Massa Sybrandt's spook!"

"Hey! What's that you say about Sybrandt, you little black sinner?" exclaimed Ariel, waking up, which he did always exactly as he went to sleep, extempore.

"Oh, Massa Sybrandt's spook come home agin——"

"I'll spook you, you little black imp of mischief," quoth Ariel, seizing the cushion from his chair, and launching it at his woolly head. "Come here with such a cock-and-bull story as that—get out, you caterpillar!"

But the herald of darkness maintained his station and his story of the appearance of Massa Sybrandt's spook, until the old people did not know what to make of it, and the young lady was in a tumult of conflicting emotions.

"Let us walk over, and inquire into the business," said the colonel, helping himself to his hat and stick; "perhaps something is really the matter with the old man."

"PERHAPS IT IS HE!" exclaimed Catalina, as a hope darted across her mind like the flash of a newly lighted taper.

The two gentlemen seemed to share in her hopes, and departed in great haste.

While this was passing, the stranger had by dint of shaking, and reasoning, and reproaching the old negro, at length brought him to a perception of the reality before him.

"And young massa no dead, after all—no spook, hey?" and the good soul almost wept for joy at his young master's return, as well as sorrow for his old master's departure.

By degrees he became sufficiently collected to give Sybrandt an account of the events we have heretofore recorded. The death of his kind uncle affected him deeply, far more deeply than the loss of his estate. He had disinherited him, it was true; but no doubt he had been convinced of his unworthiness by the representations of Catalina. There was gall and wormwood in this thought; and while he was chewing the bitter morsel, the colonel and Ariel entered without ceremony.

The reception of Sybrandt was somewhat cool and stately. The deportment of the colonel, when the really joyful surprise of the moment was past, savored of the recollection of his nephew's neglect of his daughter, of himself, and indeed all his nearest, dearest friends. Ariel was all joy, noise, and forgiveness.

"But why the plague did you not let us know you were alive?" said he at length.

"I did not know you thought me dead," replied the youth.

"Thought? We were sure of it. Do you suppose that Dennis would have dis—hem!—if he had not been certain of your death?"

"True," said the colonel; "the bequest was certainly made under that impression alone."

"He did right," said Sybrandt; "he has left his fortune to her who best deserved it. I am content."

"But I am not," said the colonel. "There cannot be a doubt that my brother Dennis altered his bequest under the full conviction that you were no more. Catalina is of age, and she is no daughter of mine if she holds this bequest a moment longer than is necessary to divest herself of it. I pledge you my honor she will."

"And I pledge you mine, sir," said Sybrandt, "that I would rather starve than accept one single atom of the land, or one penny of the gold."

"Indeed!" replied the colonel, rather offended; "may I ask why? Perhaps the donor is not sufficiently valued to make the donation welcome?"

"Spare me on this subject, sir. I had rather not talk of it, nor is it necessary. To-morrow I shall return to the army. To-night—for one night—I will trespass on the hospitality of my cousin, and remain here with her permission."

"Well, then," said the colonel, advancing, and taking his hand, "promise me, on your honor, you will visit your aunt before you go away."

"Of course, sir—certainly—it was my intention. I owe too much to her kindness to forget both my respect and my duty."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BIRTH OF A RUMOR.

In order to account for some portion of the preceding details, it will be necessary to go back to the period when the faithful half-breed did *not* carry the letters of our hero to the Flats, and of course returned without answers. This disappointment acting on the low state of our hero's spirits and exhausted frame produced an almost infantine weakness, and rendered him incapable of any kind of exertion for some time.

Having one day, however, made more than ordinary efforts, and fatigued himself greatly, he fell into a fainting fit, which his servant mistook for death, and in his fright announced it as such to the general, in the presence of the young officer, as before stated. The general was at that moment closing a letter to the commanding officer at Albany, and wrote the hasty postscript which Colonel Vancour saw.

That Sybrandt ever awakened from his swoon was, in a great measure, owing to the persevering efforts of his friend Sir William, who happened to be coming to see him just at the moment, and whose long experience in administering to the Indians had made him no indifferent practitioner. He succeeded in restoring him at last, and the youth again opened his eyes to the world which at that moment he wished to shut out forever.

The campaign henceforth lagged, and one day Sir William said to Sybrandt:

"You must go with me to Johnstown to recruit before you return home, as I suppose you mean to do as soon as you are able. There will be nothing done here till the spring."

"I feel no wish to leave this place. I may as well die here as anywhere else."

"What, again! At your old tricks again?" cried Sir William, holding up his finger in a threatening manner. "Are you committing suicide on your own hopes and happiness as usual?"

"No, Sir William; the fault is not mine *now* at least, whatever it might have been formerly. I am an alien from my home, and an offcast."

"Indeed, and by your own fault?"

"No; I was deceived, and the moment I discovered my error, hastened to acknowledge and atone for it. But my letters were read with scorn on one hand, and unfeeling apathy on the other. I shall never return home again; at least, not till I have learned to forget and forgive."

"Tell me the particulars. Remember you are talking to a friend, and that with me that name signifies the service of heart and hand."

Sybrandt then proceeded to relate what the reader already knows. Sir William listened with kind attention, and at the conclusion mused for some time.

"Strange!" said he at length. "The conduct of Catalina may be accounted for on the score of self-reproach, mixed with wounded pride and delicacy. But that Colonel Vancour, a man so kind-hearted and so just as I know him to be, should have made such an unfeeling speech is out of all reasonable calculation. I cannot account for it."

Sir William mused again, then suddenly exclaimed :

"I have it, I have it. My life on it, that scoundrel half-breed played you a trick. He never delivered your letters. Where is he? Let him be brought before me. I warrant I trip him in crossing his track, as these fellows say."

"I know not. He wandered away somewhere not long after I employed him in this business."

"I dare say. No doubt the rascal was fearful of being detected. But we shall find out the truth before long. Have you not written since?"

"Why should I?"

"True, but you shall write instantly; at least the very first opportunity."

"I had rather not write again."

"You are a proud genius," said Sir William, shaking his head. "I shall write myself then when I get home. In the meantime, without an if or and, you are my prisoner. Be ready to accompany me to-morrow."

The exercise of traveling, coöperating with the new-born hope which the suggestion of his friend Sir William had awakened, proved of great service to our hero, who arrived at the residence of that worthy knight far better than when he set out. He remained with him, occasionally hunting and shooting, and invigorating thus both mind and body, until both had in some degree recovered a healthful tone.

"As you seemed disinclined to write," said Sir William, one day, "I have done it for you. I shall send a person to Albany to-morrow. Here is the letter—read and tell me how you like it. This is the next best thing I can think of, though my own opinion is, you had much better go yourself, and see and hear with your own eyes and ears."

Sybrandt had been gradually coming to the same conclusion, and frankly answered :

"Well, Sir William, since you will turn me out of doors, there is no help for it. I will go with your messenger to-morrow, though I had rather encounter another bush-fight."

Accordingly, all things were made ready for the morrow.

"Westbrook," said the knight, as they were taking leave, "don't forget to invite me to your wedding."

"Will you come?" asked Sybrandt, with a melancholy smile.

"It will be much that shall hinder me. Do you promise?"

"I do, but you are far more likely to be invited to my funeral."

"Tut! I am no true prophet if you are a bachelor this day twelvemonth. Farewell. I would thou hadst been my son."

"Farewell. Would I had such a father."

Our hero proceeded slowly on his journey, and arrived at the mansion of his deceased benefactor in the manner we have before described.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ESTATE WITH AN ENCUMBRANCE.

CATALINA had been let into the secret of the ghost story by her mother. At first she became paler than ever, and could hardly support herself on her chair. Then she turned red, and a rosy blush of hope abided on her cheek, where for many a day it had not abided before.

"I will bestow it all on him again," thought she, and her full heart relieved itself in a shower of silent tears.

In the morning she begged that when Sybrandt came to call on her mother she might be permitted to see him alone.

Her request was acquiesced in, and she waited in trembling anxiety his promised visit. He came soon after breakfast, and after a somewhat painful and awkward interview forced himself to inquire after Catalina.

"She has had a long illness," said the mother, "and you will scarcely know her. But she wishes to see you."

"To see *me?*" cried Sybrandt.

"I mean just what I say. She is waiting to see you in the next room."

"What *can* this mean?" thought Sybrandt. "They must think I have no feeling, or they have no feeling themselves;" and the thought roused his native energies.

He strutted into the next room as if he was leading his regiment to battle.

"Don't look so fierce, or you will frighten my daughter," said madame.

But Catalina was frightened almost out of her wits already. She was too much taken up in rallying her own self-possession to observe how Sybrandt looked when he walked. He had indeed been some moments in the room before either could utter a single word. At length their eyes met, and the excessive paleness each observed in the countenance of the other went straight to the hearts of both.

"Dear cousin," said Sybrandt, "how ill you look."

Catalina was even with him, for she answered in his very words: "Dear cousin, how ill *you* look."

Pride and affection were now struggling in the bosoms of the two young people. Catalina rallied soonest, and spoke as follows, with modest firmness:

"Colonel Westbrook, I wished to see you on a subject which has occasioned me much pain, the bequest of my uncle. I cannot accept it. It was made when we all thought you were no more. I should hate myself could I think for a moment of robbing you of what is yours—what I am sure my uncle intended should be yours, until he thought you dead.

I sent for you, with the full approbation of my father and mother, to make over this property to you, to whom it belongs. I am of age, and here is the conveyance. I beseech you to accept it with the same frankness with which it is offered."

"What, rob my cousin? No, Catalina, never."

"I feared it," said Catalina, with a sigh. "You do not respect me enough to accept even of justice at my hands."

"It would be meanness—it would be degradation; and since you charge me with a want of respect to you, I must be allowed to say that I am too proud to accept anything, much less so great a gift as this, from one who did not think the almost death-bed contrition of a man who had discovered his error and was anxious to atone for it, worthy of her notice."

"What—what do you mean?" exclaimed Catalina.

"The letter I sent you," replied he, proudly. "I never meant to complain or remonstrate, but you have forced me to justify myself."

"What letter, in the name of Heaven?"

"That which I wrote you the moment I was sufficiently recovered of my wounds, to say that I had had a full explanation with Colonel Gilfillan; to say that I had done you injustice; to ask forgiveness; and——"

"And you wrote me such a letter?" asked Catalina, gasping for breath. "What would you say, what would you do, if I assured you solemnly I never saw that letter, or dreamed it was ever written?"

"I would say that I believed you as I would the white-robed truth herself; and I would on my knees beg your forgiveness for twice doubting you."

"Then I do assure you, in the purity and singleness of my heart, that I never saw or knew aught of that letter."

"And did—did Gilfillan speak the truth?"

"He did."

"You are mine then, Catalina, at last," faltered Sybrandt.

"You will accept my uncle's bequest, then?" asked she, with one of her long-absent smiles.

"Provided you add yourself, dear girl."

"You must take it with that encumbrance," said she.

"What can they have to talk about all this time, I wonder?" cogitated the old lady, while she fidgeted about from her chair towards the door, and from the door to her chair.

As she could distinguish the increasing animation of their voices she fidgeted still more; and there is no knowing what might have been the consequence if Catalina and Sybrandt had not entered the room looking so happy.

The moment Sybrandt departed Catalina explained all to her mother.

"Alas!" thought the good woman, "she will never be a titled lady; yet who knows but Sybrandt may one day go to England and be knighted?"

This happy thought reconciled her at once to the whole catastrophe, and she embraced her daughter, sincerely wishing her joy at the removal of all her perplexities.

"Hang it," said Ariel, "if I ever saw a more glorious wedding-supper in my life."

"Do you recollect my last words when we parted, Colonel Westbrook?" said Sir William Johnson, their most honored guest.

"I do, Sir William. You are a prophet as well as a warrior and legislator."

"What did he say?" whispered a damsel dressed in white, who sat by the side of our hero.

"He said in less than a twelvemonth I should be married to an angel."

"Take care it does not turn out like dreams, which, you know, go by contraries," said the blushing damsel.

But the knight turned out a true prophet, even according to the gallant turn given to his prediction by our hero. Catalina approved herself an excellent wife, and a pattern of a mother, for she never let her husband find out she was not an angel, nor her children that she could be conquered by importunity. But we have been getting on too fast. To return to the wedding feast:—

"Sybrandt," said Sir William, "I shall be obliged to depart to-morrow before you are up. Farewell, and happiness attend you! I have but one word to add—action, remember, action alone can secure the happiness of your future life, by making you useful and distinguished."

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